THE ECUMENICAL REVIEW

WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

Vol. XVIII - N° 4 - October 1966

THE ECUMENICAL REVIEW

VOLUME XVIII — NUMBER 4

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THE ECUMENICAL REVIEW
A QUARTERLY
of the
WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES
Except where otherwise indicated the writers of the articles are alone responsible for the opinions expressed

VOLUME XVIII | OCTOBER 1966 | NUMBER 4

WORLD CONFERENCE ON CHURCH AND SOCIETY

by

W. A. VISSER 'T HOOFT

A World Conference on Church and Society in the year of our Lord 1966 ! Outside the churches the cynical will shrug their shoulders. Many of the sympathetic will at least raise their eyebrows. Inside the churches many will wonder whether we are not undertaking an impossible task or even leading the churches astray. And we ourselves, as men and women who know the vastness and complexity of the problems before us, who have been assailed by the barrage of concentrated intellectual fire coming from the four preparatory volumes and who are aware of the unpreparedness of our churches for their new tasks, we are the first to admit that our job in these next twelve days is overwhelming.

Of the many questions raised about our undertaking three deserve special attention.

We will be told — in fact we have already been told — that we have chosen the wrong theme for our conference. In a world in which the very foundations are being shaken, in which all faiths, all ideologies are called in question, in which it is loudly proclaimed that God is dead and that man's existence has ultimately no meaning — the one and only important theme is surely to proclaim the gospel of the living God and to call men to that repentance which leads to newness of life, to hope, to meaningful existence. And does that not imply that direct personal evangelism comes first and that the issues of life in society are secondary ?

Can a new and better society be built with men who have no faith, no hope?

We take these questions seriously. Yet we are convinced that our conference is not putting last things first. Our conference is about the full meaning and implications of a true turning to God, about the implications of conversion, about the fruits of repentance. From the days of Amos to those of John the Baptist the prophets have insisted that repentance is not merely a change of mind, but a total revolution of life. That is why John the Baptist challenges his hearers "Bring forth fruits worthy of repentance," or as N.E.B. translates "prove your repentance by the fruit it bears," And when Jesus comes to proclaim: "The Kingdom is upon you. Repent and believe the Gospel," it becomes completely clear that repentance means nothing less than to follow the way of the Kingdom, a way which has not merely, not even in the first place, to do with this or that religious practice, but with our daily life, with our relationships in society. So let us not be ashamed to deal with most terrestrial problems. It is true that conversion means first of all turning to God and liberation from the world. We must protest against any attempts to suppress the vertical dimension of conversion and the element of sacrifice within it. But it is equally true that it is in our day to day decisions in our social life that the reality of our turning to God is constantly tested. We will never be able to convince the modern world of the truth of the Gospel unless we offer it in its fullness; that is with its radical critique of our social attitudes and our social structures confirmed by our personal and corporate obedience.

We will also be told that our undertaking is bound to end in failure because the churches are divided and what is perhaps even more important because we meet at a time when, in practically all churches, traditional theological and ethical concepts are called in question. None of the ethical systems which had served as a basis for the social teachings of the churches and which many of us had to study laboriously in the magnum opus of Ernst Troeltsch or in the text books on ethics provides today a secure foundation. The great discussion concerning contextualism versus abiding principles cuts right across denominational frontiers. The nature of the biblical message concerning society and its right interpretation is a subject of controversy.

Have we in these circumstances any chance to arrive at a common mind? I would give the following answer to that question. It is not the first time that we find ourselves in such a situation. My thoughts

go back to the Stockholm Conference of 1925. That meeting was characterised by a conflict, almost a "dialogue de sourds," between the adherents of an optimistic social gospel and those of an otherworldly "two-kingdom" doctrine. Many a time in those days it seemed to us that it would be impossible to find any common categories of thought, any common objectives. But as the days went on, the pressure of the one common gospel working upon men aware of the need of the world and ashamed about the inaction of the churches led us out of the deadlock and enabled us to speak together. The conference message, the very first word spoken by the churches together on their task in society, was adopted with virtual unanimity by the whole conference. Again and again in the ecumenical movement we have had that experience of a force beyond us leading us out of our divergences and perplexities to a common witness. Our task is to respond to the Holy Spirit which seeks to gather us in order to use us for His purposes of renewal and healing. For this is the one thing that distinguishes this gathering from other meetings of men and women concerned about the problem of the modern world : that we reckon with that extra-dimension, with the recreating and gathering activity of the living God in history.

In this connection everything will depend on our openmindedness, not in the sense of lack of conviction but in the sense of readiness to discover new directions in the work of the Holy Spirit in our time, new forms of Christian obedience. Karl Rahner has recently made the remark that if we take the realities of our time seriously and the new questions and needs we must face, if we think *forward*, we will discover that our theological controversies about natural law and existential decisions do not need to separate us, for we will be forced to think new thoughts together.

A third question is raised : have you a right to speak ? By their attachment to the status quo, by their failure to read the signs of the times, by their silence at the time when the great issues of social justice or national independence first became acute, so it is said, the churches have lost the right to give any guidance. We will not answer by an attempt to justify the churches or ourselves. There is too much truth in the accusation to dismiss it. But we can answer two things. First of all that from the days of Amos to the days of Martin Luther King the fiercest criticism of the people of God has come from within the churches. Secondly that we do not speak because we want to have a say in the affairs of the world, but because we cannot live with God,

with our fellow-men, with ourselves, if we keep silent. To speak of the prophetic ministry of the Church sounds arrogant for where are the Isaiahs or Jeremiahs among us? We echo the cry "Would that all the Lord's people were prophets, that the Lord would put his spirit upon them!" (Numbers 11. 29). But in this one respect we are all in the prophetic situation that God overcomes our many strong objections to be used by Him and says to us: go ahead, I will use you in spite of your unworthiness.

* * *

In our work we do not start from scratch. Our movement is too young to have developed a strong sense of tradition, and we do not consider the thoughts and words of the fathers at Stockholm or Oxford, of Amsterdam, Evanston or New Delhi as binding upon us. But we must avoid the opposite mistake, too often made in the ecumenical movement, of speaking as if we were the very first to tackle the problems of church and society. Let there be new thoughts for a new day, but let us use those insights from our predecessors which illuminate our own task.

It seems to me that this applies especially to the watchword which we have used in the last 18 years. When in the beginning of 1948 on the way from the inevitable luncheon at the Athenaeum to the meeting place of the preparatory group for Section III of the Amsterdam Assembly Dr. J. H. Oldham, the key-man of the Oxford Conference, asked me whether the concept of "the Responsible Society" could and should be used as the crystallisation point of ecumenical social thinking and I agreed readily, we did not realise that this expression would continue to play a central role in ecumenical discussions during the next two decades. The reason for its success was not only that for once the ecumenical movement used a phrase which practically everybody could understand. It was also that it killed many birds with one stone. It was a multi-dimensional concept, for it included the responsibility of each citizen, that of society for its members and that of society to norms beyond itself; moreover it contained a great deal of biblical substance, for what is more characteristic of the Bible than its view of man as the creature called into being to respond to God and answerable to God for his relations with his fellow-men? Yet it is not an abstract moral principle and has sufficient flexibility to apply to very diverse situations.

For what society, what person can claim to have realized the full implications of a truly responsible society? So — to put it in the terms we use today — the adherents of continuity in ethics on the one hand and the adherents of contextualism on the other hand could both feel at home with this orientation.

That is not to say that we have always used the concept of the responsible society in the right way. I believe that the criticism according to which it has too often been interpreted in the light of the specific Western democratic and parliamentary tradition is right. But I believe that this is no necessary reason to abandon the concept. What we do need however is a fresh exegesis of what the responsible society means in our time. It seems to me very clear that we must very especially work out two new dimensions of the concept.

The first is that of a responsible *world* society in which each nation feels responsible for the welfare of all other nations. In Amsterdam the emphasis was too largely on economic justice *within* each nation. We have come to see far more clearly that the crucial issue now is that of *international* economic justice. We know that the hopes we entertained concerning the rapid closing of the gap between affluent and non-affluent societies are not being realized. We know that unless a profound change takes place in the thought and action of the developed nations the world will become increasingly divided between a Northern part getting richer than is good for its soul and a Southern part which will continue to be plagued by poverty and probably even by widespread and acute famine. And we know that this must lead not only to increasing bitterness, but sharp conflict of intercontinental dimensions. U Thant has said rightly "I think the widening gulf between the 'haves' and the 'have-nots' constitutes a more serious threat to international peace and security than any other rifts, either ideological or racial."

Now our peoples, including our Christian people, are at the moment quite unready to face the fact that through the present forms of governmental aid and of giving by the churches we are not really coming nearer to a solution of the problem. And a mere reciting of the facts will not be sufficient to change their minds. That has been shown when the 75 developing nations faced the developed nations at the U.N. Conference on Trade and Development. What is lacking is a dynamic moral conviction about our inescapable duty in this field. We need to proclaim that in this world of our time we are our brother's keepers and keeping does not mean keeping in one's pocket or under one's thumb but caring

for him for his own sake. We need to re-interpret what the basic biblical word "neighbour" means for us today. H. W. Bartsch has pointed out (Christian Social Ethics in a Changing World, p. 67) that the question which our Lord puts at the end of the Parable of the Good Samaritan is: "Which of these three do you think *became* neighbour to him who fell among thieves?" That means surely that to be a neighbour is to be on the move, that God places us constantly in new concrete situations in which he gives us new neighbours and that to live the life of neighbourliness is to be ready to discover again and again which of our fellowmen have a real claim on us. In today's world, as the economic and political facts of life make abundantly clear, we are called to become neighbours and accept responsibility for men, wherever they live, who are in need.

At the moment our peoples including the Christians among them are not really ready to shoulder that responsibility. There is considerable willingness to contribute to relief-actions, there is little understanding that such actions, while necessary, do not deal with the roots of the problem. There is lip service to the thesis that something ought to be done about the problems of the nations which are in the midst of the desperate struggle against famine and misery, but there is little awareness that nothing less than radical structural changes in international economic relations is required. And those who propose such changes are easily written off as naive dreamers. What can we do as a conference to confront our churches with the realities of the situation, to awaken a new sense of world-embracing solidarity, to point the way to a responsible *world*-society?

The other dimension of the responsible society which needs to be presented with far greater clarity has to do with the place of man in the new highly organised society. At Amsterdam we were still largely unaware of the problems which the next decades would bring. We did not, we could not realize to what extent the welfare state in accepting far greater responsibility for its citizens could lead to a weakening of the sense of responsibility among those citizens. We have now learned that there are different ways of depriving men of the possibility of acting responsibly. There is not only the way of autocracy and dictatorship, there is also the much more subtle way of giving man the impression that every important question is decided for him. And so we now face the dilemma that in a number of countries the development of a more responsible society has led, particularly among young people, to an

acute sense of frustration, because men feel that no one offers them a chance to live responsibly, that is meaningfully. The "Economist" asked recently what one can expect from youth who live in a time when the stomachs are full and God is dead.

The problem becomes all the more acute now that we have entered into the technological era when, with the help of the computers, it becomes possible and necessary to forecast the future development of society and to take decisions which will shape that development. A multitude of questions arise. The old question "who plans the planners ?" must be rephrased as : "who will work out the programmes for the computers." For as we read in one of the preparatory volumes, the computer can perform any task where the decision-making rules are made out in advance. Will these rules be made in the esoteric atmosphere of scientific laboratories or will they be made in a wide-open debate between all men willing to participate in responsible choices ? Take two of the choices that have to be made. Must we accept the development described by many futurologists leading to a society in which one fifth of the people will have the privilege to work and to create and in which four fifths will be useless from the economic point of view and have the doubthful privilege to discover ways of spending their endless leisure-time ? And what must be our attitude to such proposals as are made by some biologists to produce the superman by biological intervention and think in terms of salvation by drugs or electric currents ? As we face such questions we see more clearly than ever before that in speaking about the responsible society we are not dealing with secondary issues, we are dealing with the very destiny of man. And we realize that if the churches should have nothing to say on these questions they can no longer pretend to represent Jesus of Nazareth who warned us that the spiritual integrity of man as a responsible being is vastly more important than the winning of the world.

I come therefore to the conclusion that our present understanding of our watchword must be "Responsible men participating responsibly in a world society in which all accept responsibility for the common welfare."

It remains to say a word about the hopes and expectations of the World Council of Churches with regard to this conference. We do not ask you to speak in the name of the Churches and of the World Council of Churches. We ask you to speak to us all. The reason is not that this conference has a majority of laymen. That makes you more, not less

representative of the real life of the Christian community. The reason is that you should have full freedom to express your mind. The results of your work will be submitted to the churches and also to the World Council of Churches at the time of its next Assembly in 1968 in Uppsala. And we promise that those results will be considered very seriously.

This means at the same time that we would ask you to deal with the fundamental issues rather than with any specific problems which are problems of today, but not necessarily of to-morrow. It is not that we are not aware of those problems or are afraid to deal with them. In the WCC, and particularly in its Commission of the Churches on International Affairs, we seek to follow the developments in the fields of international and interracial relations very closely and we have recently expressed our mind on such issues as the war in Vietnam, on current aspects of racial conflicts, on disarmament, etc. But we think that this particular conference will render its greatest services if it concentrates its attention on the deeper, the underlying issues of the common life and thinks in terms of the long range tasks. This does not exclude that you should speak of concrete present day problems as illustrations of the wider issues which have to be faced.

What then do we expect you to do ? I give you five points :

First, to get the churches to confront the realities of the rapidly changing social situation, so that they may not deal with the problems of yesterday but with those of today and of to-morrow.

Second, to show that in spite of our different backgrounds and theological divergence we can speak a relevant common word on the urgent social questions and thus to demonstrate that in the Gospel we find the force to transcend national, racial or ideological concerns or interests. Our hope is also that in these matters we may increasingly find a common language between the churches in the WCC and the Roman Catholic Church.

Third, to show the churches what their particular task is in shaping a responsible society both through their own spiritual and educational work and through their witness to the peoples and their governments.

Fourth, to work out what the position and action of the churches together as a world-wide community must be with regard to the problem of overcoming the chasm between increasingly affluent nations and nations threatened by poverty and famine.

Fifth, to help the churches to become responsible partners in making the decisive choices concerning the future developments of society, choices in which nothing less than the meaning of human life is at stake.

* * *

I would end with a strikingly relevant word of the earliest of the prophets. It is relevant because it is spoken by a layman to the people of God. It is relevant because it warns us against thinking of our conference as an end in itself. It is relevant because it tells us what the divine purpose for us is. According to Amos (chapter 5) the Lord God says: "I take no delight in your solemn assemblies." That is the warning. But the Lord says also: "Let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like an everflowing stream." These are our marching orders.

MODERNISATION OF TRADITIONAL SOCIETIES AND THE STRUGGLE FOR NEW CULTURAL ETHOS

by

M. M. Thomas

Introduction

Our concern is limited to a field between the structures of society on the one hand, and the institutions and beliefs of religion on the other; that is, the sphere of cultural ethos, of the climate of thought, feeling and spirituality in which men see themselves and the world, and through which they shape their attitudes and behaviour. Ortega Y Gasset has defined culture as "the vital system of ideas of a period," the spiritual framework which mediates itself to men through myths, metaphysics, and ideology. It grasps their emotions through cultic rites and liturgies, artistic creation and the evolution of appealing symbols. In a cultural ethos the sense of the transcendent, of the human, and of the material are so closely intertwined that it is possible to speak of it as an integral spiritual vision, using the word spiritual in a broad sense.

There is a traditional ethos closely related to the social institutions and religions of traditional societies. And today as these traditional societies seek modernisation, they are also struggling for a new ethos, a new spiritual and cultural outlook which will correspond to the process of modernisation and provides a dynamic for it.

The idea of modernisation

Is a new spiritual and cultural dynamic necessary for the modernisation of traditional societies? The answer will depend on the way in which we define modernisation. Mrs. Takeda Cho in the preparatory volume, *Man in Society*, speaks of the debate that is going on in Japan about the idea of modernisation. Professor John Hall and his group of American scholars define modernisation as the absorption by a society of the material and social technology necessary to increase economic

productivity. Modern Japanese scholars dispute this narrow definition of modernisation. They hold that it entails also the transformation of society and state by a new vision of human dignity, that it is produced by the interaction of a new technology *and* a new humanism. In fact, the struggle against poverty and for economic development today cannot be understood apart from the awakening of people to a new sense of human dignity. Therefore the struggle for a new cultural ethos can be seen as both a means for technological development and also as its end. It is significant that even the Japanese Marxists are opposed to the definition of modernisation solely in terms of technical development, and see it as the struggle for a new humanism.

I have dealt with the Japanese debate about modernisation at some length because the narrower definition of modernisation is very widespread. It is presented in its extreme form by Robert Theobald in *New Possibilities in Modern Technology*. He says that cybernetics makes the development of productive forces without any change in the ethos of the traditional societies not only possible but highly desirable. In fact he goes so far as to affirm that "many of the present values in the poor countries are highly suitable to a cybernated age" and should be introduced into "the countries already rich." There are many in Asia and Africa who believe that the new nations should strive to emulate pre-war Japan which built Western technology on the foundations of a traditional ethos. I do not think this is desirable, because it does not have any concern for the renewal of man and human values in traditional society; and I agree with the modern Japanese scholars who consider that transformation of the cultural ethos is an essential aspect of modernisation.

My thesis is that the spiritual dimensions of the contemporary awakening of the peoples of Asia and Africa, stimulated by the Western impact, and their search for a new humanism provide a starting point for the process of building indigenous cultural foundations for modernisation.

The cultural revolution in traditional societies

Let us now look more closely at the nature of the change from a traditional ethos to the spirit of modernity inherent in the contemporary awakening of the peoples of the third world. Each of the many traditional societies and cultures has its own characteristics: some were moulded by the primal vision of the tribal religions, others by the metaphysical and mystical ethos of Hinduism and Buddhism, the more

pragmatic Confucian ethic, or the Islamic tradition. In fact the paper by Dr. Fals Borda in the preparatory volume *Man in Society*, makes clear that the Latin American cultures formed by Christianity are also illustrative of a traditional ethos and are involved in the struggle for a new ethos conducive to modernisation. While we must therefore speak in very general terms ; what we shall be studying is basically the cultural aspects of the transition from tradition to Modernity.

Let us now look at three aspects of this transition from a traditional ethos to a spirit of modernity :

(1) The first is a movement from an ethos with a vision of an undifferentiated unity to the contemporary cultural awakening which recognises differentiation leading to a heightened sense of individuality, and is searching for a new unity which acknowledges this enhanced individuality and the essential differences it creates. This may be illustrated from different levels of traditional cultures.

The Swiss Psychiatrist, Dr. Erna M. Hoch, who has spent several years working in a psychiatric clinic in India and is now a consultant to the Indian Government, has written in our preparatory volume and elsewhere on the psychic climate as the joint-family pattern breaks up to form the smaller Western-type families. In the West, she says, the family and other social groups are built like a roof "on top of the primary pillars of individuals who are conceived as separate entities," but in India the joint family is "the primary *root* organisation of humanity" which unites all its members in a kind of "primary oneness, a kind of symbiotic atmosphere." This climate cannot "promote the formation of robust ego-boundaries." And Dr. Hoch calls the new cultural awakening symbolised by the movement from a joint-family to small-unit family pattern, a transition from a "primary symbiotic-emphatic union" to the dynamism of responsible selfhood and interpersonal relations. The traditional family is "a basic primary unit, a kind of emotional continuum." In the new type of small family, "each member has to entertain relationships with the outside world on his own merit and in his own sphere of interest," thus forcing him to become conscious of an individual existence and responsibility. The contemporary awakening, in other words, means the break up of an undifferentiated emotional continuum into a differentiated individualism. K. M. Panikker maintains that this individualism is the essential cultural requirement of a new idea of community which transcends the narrow family, tribal castes and other communal groupings which were incapable of arriving at a sense of social

wholeness. In fact the transition from traditional communality to modern community is founded on this new psychological spiritual awakening of radical individuality.

I presume that the extended family is characteristic of most traditional societies, and that therefore what Dr. Hoch and K. M. Panikker have said about India is also relevant to other traditional cultures.

John Taylor in his sensitive and penetrating study of African religion, *The Primal Vision* sees the vision of "a total unbroken unity" of the cosmos as characteristic of African spirituality. There is the sense of a spiritual continuum within which the dead and the living, natural objects, spirits and gods, the individual, the clan and the tribe, animals, plants, minerals and man, form an unbroken hierarchical unity of spiritual forces. The self of man is not an individual self but an extended universal self present and actively participating in all the parts of the totality. Today the new spiritual awakening is tending to break this vision of totality and to produce individuals and groups conscious of their separate individual selfhood and its rights. The dynamism of an emerging selfhood is characteristic of the forward-looking cultural ferment in Africa and a necessary stage in the struggle for a new ethos of responsibility.

Many recent studies of Eastern religions and cultures have shown that undifferentiated cosmic monism is their common basic characteristic and that the break-up of this monism is the fundamental feature of modern cultural change. Van Leeuven in his *Christianity in World History* has characterised the Eastern cultures as "ontocratic" as including all-reality — nature, men and gods — within an ontological or metaphysical unity of being. The Philosopher F. S. C. Northrop, who has a very much more positive evaluation of the spirituality and ethos of Eastern cultures, and considers them as complementary to the Western, calls it the "immediately apprehended, undifferentiated aesthetic continuum." In this continuum "all things whether they be nonhuman or human natural objects" share a "boundless indeterminate aesthetic factor" so that the determination of radical monotheism or its opposite, radical atheism, or the determination of radical human personality, is impossible.

In the contemporary social and cultural awakening in China, Japan or India, we can see a different spiritual outlook emerging. There is a new emphasis on differentiation; on the essential otherness of man from subhuman nature, making possible a scientific attitude of conquest

and exploitation of nature by man ; on the individual with fundamental rights to self-determination and non-conformity with the group ; on the otherness of the world and society from God, making possible the autonomy of secular life from religion.

(2) A second aspect of the movement from tradition to modernity in the cultural ethos is the movement from the concept of world-as-nature to that of world-as-history. Karl Marx in his writings on India has described the spiritual ethos of traditional Asian societies as based on a belief in "a never changing natural destiny" coupled with "a brutalising worship of nature." For him the Asian village was a combination of a stagnant economy, vegetative social existence, and nature-worship. It was incapable of pushing Asia forward out of a stagnation patterned after the natural cycle into the dynamism of a historical consciousness. For this reason, he said, the Asian village could look on historical events like the ruin of Empires as though they were natural events. Of course, Marxism in its later developments did precisely what Marx criticised Asian traditional village cultures as doing, namely interpreting history, in terms of natural necessity. But he was in large measure right in noting that Asian cultural ethos never came to distinguish radically between natural necessity and historical destiny ; and popular religion in all traditional village societies and cultures, accepted the cycle of the seasons and of agriculture as the pattern for the life of man and the cosmos. Arnold Toynbee has protested vehemently against the description of all cultures and religions of Asia as involved in nature-worship. He is right with regard to the higher religions of Asia, but even in the higher philosophical, ethical or mystic reaches of Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism and Confucianism, the tension between spirit and nature is absent. They are either too naturalistic or too mystical to develop the idea of man's historical freedom and destiny

The traditional idea of history as cyclical puts a premium on harmony and therefore tends to consider the creativity and enterprise of freedom as evil. But in the awakening cultures of many lands the idea is growing that the creativity and enterprise of freedom are good in themselves, even if they involve a large measure of destructiveness and disharmony. Moreover, the traditional ethos recognises no ultimate contradiction and believes in co-existence without radical encounter or dialogue. Japanese scholars have interpreted the existence side by side of contradictory values and structures as the expression of Asia's cultural stagnation. No idea fights another idea to the finish. The bullock cart and

the motor car and the spirituality which they represent continue to co-exist without conflict. In Hinduism many religions and gods co-exist. Everything new is assimilated ; nothing is ever rejected. But today when every historical event is fraught with significance and with a sense of movement towards a goal, ideological struggles demand decision, commitment and a fight to the finish.

And one of the most important aspects of the spiritual awakening of contemporary Asia and Africa is this new sense of history, of historical dynamism and historical mission. When Dr. Radhakrishnan was Vice-President of India he told an All-India drama seminar, that in the past India never produced tragic plays. Where there is no sense of a purposive movement towards a goal, there can be no sense of having missed it. Even the Poet Kalidasa's *Sakuntala* which might have been a profound tragedy merely depicts the play of fate, which after a time works itself out to a happy ending. Today, however, Indian playwriters are writing tragedies in all the regional languages, dealing not only with social but also spiritual tragedy. The sense of purposive even tragic history to which Asia and Africa are today waking up, is an essential aspect of the movement from the spirit of traditionalism to the spirit of modernity.

(3) A third aspect of the movement from tradition to modernity is the movement from a sacred to a secular ethos. Traditional cultures have been religious cultures in which nature itself was considered sacred, and society and state were institutionally and spiritually integrated with religion. Religion provided the authoritative principle of integration and upheld the idea of a fixed, eternal spiritual and moral order to which everything had to conform. The traditional Hindu dharma supporting a caste-system, the traditional Confucian ethic reinforcing a hierarchical paternalistic order, the tribal order under the authority of the chief — all required conformity to the sacred order expressed in sacred tradition. There were no doubt plenty of protests against the sacred order and ethos in the history of these cultures, but these could never assume the character of public philosophy. But it is precisely characteristic of the contemporary awakening in Asia and Africa that a new public philosophy which protests radically against the sacred ethos is being formed. There are three features of this protest : (1) the desacralisation of nature which prepared the way for science and technology and the idea of a nature devoid of spirits ; (2) a break-up of the traditional institutional integration of religion, society and state, and increasing emphasis on the freedom

of politics and society from the control of institutional religious authority ; this process of secularisation is hastened by the necessity for common action for national development by adherents of many religions and of no religion ; (3) as a counterpart of this secularisation of state and society an affirmation of the autonomy of the secular areas of life, the abandonment of the idea of an eternally fixed order sanctioned by religion, and an increasing emphasis on personal freedom and social justice, on the one hand, and empirical scientific or technological rationality as the criteria for ordering secular affairs on the other.

Thus the modern cultural awakening of Asia and Africa involves radical changes in the traditional ethos, bringing in their wake, a new awareness of responsible selfhood and interpersonal relations, a new sense of history, historical mission and human creativity, and a new emphasis on empirical science and its secular rationality as paths to truth. Together these may be seen as symbolic of the awakening of traditional cultures to a new dimension of human existence, which may be termed personal, i.e. man as freedom in responsibility. It is in promoting these changes that traditional societies can develop a new cultural ethos conducive to modernisation. No doubt these have been stimulated by the Western technical, cultural and religious impact and that impact continues. But independent nationhood and the tasks of nation-building have led to the development of indigenous religious and secular movements which are speeding up this process of cultural change.

Two false reactions

I want to say a few words here about two false reactions to the cultural revolution taking place in traditional societies.

First, some advocates of the traditional cultures and the religions militantly defend the traditional cultural ethos against the new spirit of modernity. Of course, they are prepared to use the new nationalist ideology, the power of the new state, and modern technology to suppress the new spirit and to promote the resurgence of the traditional religious cultures and their value systems. This revivalism is strengthened by several factors in Asia and Africa : the deep-rooted traditionalism of the awakening masses newly invested with political power ; the fear among the intelligentsia of demoralisation resulting from the break-up of an integrated religious culture, and the anxiety caused by the terrifying burden of personal responsibility among people emancipated by the

spirit of modernity. I think it was the theologian Nels Ferré who after his visit to Asia contrasted the inner spiritual security of men, women and children in the traditional Japanese families with the emotional insecurity of members of Western families in Japan. Many prefer the freedom from anxiety of a girl in India who knows her marriage will be arranged at the proper time by her parents to the fear of the Western girls that she will not have a date for the dance. Families and societies which have suffered spiritually from the rebelliousness of adolescents may envy a culture in which adolescence does not produce such crises. In fact, what has been called "the sickness of the West" makes the traditional climate of nature-worship, undifferentiated mystic unity, perennial philosophy and the concept of fate very appealing to many Western thinkers who feel that rational individuality and historical dynamism have produced unbearable existential *angst*. Missionary leaders like John Taylor share the feeling of many that "the sickness of the West which reveals itself in the divorce of the sacred from the secular, of the cerebral from the instinctive and the loneliness and homelessness of individualism may be healed through a recovery of the wisdom which Africa has not yet thrown away." I am quite sure that the West has its sickness and that Asia and Africa have spiritual wisdom to share with the West, but I do not believe they will impart it by keeping intact the vision of the undifferentiated unbroken unity of traditional spirituality and society. Only if it is broken up through modernisation can the responsible self emerge which alone can produce that cultural creativity so necessary to bring Asian and African cultural treasures to the ecumene. P. N. Mathur says: "If the motivation of (Western) materialism is 'self,' that of (Eastern) spiritualism is 'selflessness,' not even 'unselfishness." Unselfishness presupposes the existence of the self, while selflessness implies its total denial." This distinction between the selflessness of the traditional ethos and the unselfishness (along with selfishness of course) made possible by the spirit of modernity is often overlooked. For example John Taylor in his otherwise splendid study the *Primal Vision*, seems to confuse the total unbroken unity of society with the community of inter-personal relations. At one point, he quotes Oldham's words about I-Thou relations as the path towards true human selfhood, and comments ' "On the face of it, that seems more congenial to Africa than to Europe." This is evidently an error. The mystique of the participation of all in the primal vision has to be broken up before the vision of community based on the dynamic of living intercourse of

the self with other selves can emerge. Traditional societies are now awakening from "selflessness" to selfhood. This may lead to selfishness or unselfishness, to irresponsibility or responsibility, but it is a necessity — both inescapable and desirable — for men's coming of age. It is for this reason that I cannot agree with Taylor that the cultural mission of the Church is "to discover a new synthesis between a saving gospel and a total, unbroken unity of society." No. The Church's mission is rather to provide the framework within which the ferment of the gospel can break the primal unity and enable self-awareness to emerge and pass into the new integration of inter-personal relations of unselfishness, forgiveness and love.

(2) A reaction at the other extreme is to equate modernisation with radical Westernisation, that is with a total displacement of traditional cultures by Western culture. The impact of a dynamic Western culture, through Western education, Western technology and Western politics has undoubtedly shaken the foundations of traditional cultures; and when Western education was introduced into Asian-African countries, many hoped that Western culture would replace traditional culture in a generation or two. But this hope was belied. Arthur Mayhew, the British educationalist, has analysed the reason for this. He claims that the policy of imposing Western culture led people to lead two parallel mutually exclusive lives, a modern public one and a traditional private one. The two co-existed without a real encounter — often in the same person. As Takeda Cho has said, the Japanese lived in a house of two stories, the upper fully furnished in Western style and the lower in fully Japanese style, with no staircase between them. The externals of modernity were accepted, but its spirit was not absorbed into the core of man's being, which remained traditional. And with the coming of nationalism, the traditional ethos from underground took its fanatic revenge against Westernisation. This happened in India at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th in the emergence of militant Hindu nationalism under Tilak's leadership. It happened in the militant revival of Mau Mau tribalism later in this century. In Ceylon the Buddhist-cum-Sinhala traditionalism came to prominence after independence under the leadership of teachers of the indigenous language, practitioners of indigenous medicine and the monks of the Buddhist Sangh, all of whom had been ignored in the period of Westernisation. As Arthur Mayhew has said, the policy of displacement of traditional culture by the Western is a mistake; Western Culture can

serve modernity in non-Western lands only by stimulating an inner renewal of traditional cultures.

No people can forget their cultural past. What they can do is reinterpret the past and select and bring out those aspects of it which are in line with the demands of the present and the future, thus giving new meaning to the past. Therefore struggle for a new culture in non-Western lands means grappling with and reinterpreting the inner being and values of the traditional culture from within the light of their relevance to modernisation. Jawaharlal Nehru was never tired of emphasising that the struggle for a new ethos required not cultural imitation but cultural creativity. For him, this meant a journey to discover India in a new way, a search in the Indian tradition for the germs of a humanism on which he could build a new cultural ethos embodying the spirit of modernity. Even the communists in China and India have undertaken such journeys into the past in an effort to affirm that communism fulfils the more dynamic stirrings of indigenous cultures. The only alternative to Westernisation and militant traditionalism are a creative renewal of indigenous cultures based on a spiritual encounter and interaction between the traditional and Western cultures, leading to a new cultural synthesis, conducive to modernisation. In this sense, the cultural task is closely related to the reform of traditional religions, metaphysics and ethics, and the renaissance of indigenous arts, language and literature in the light of the demands of modern technical and social development.

It is this note that I miss in Van Leuven's *Christianity and World History* : in an otherwise epoch-making book, the author does not see within the Eastern cultures the tradition of continuous struggles against ontocracy, with which the new spirit of renewal can establish continuity ; he also writes off without proper discrimination all resurgence of traditional religions and cultures merely as reaffirmations of the traditional ontocratic spirit, and is blind to the creative indigenous movements towards a modern cultural ethos. In reverse, he seems blind to the seriousness of the dehumanising trends at the heart of western culture, which erupted only the other day in a modern revival of pagan demons and gods in Nazism and still finds expression in Western ethos.

In fact, Van Leeuven with his new radical messianism of Western secularism, and his sense of radical discontinuity between West and East leaves the impression that he equates modernisation with Westerisation and is purely negative towards the Eastern religions and cultures.

This may have revived the drooping spirits of those in charge of Western cultural and religious missions in Asia and Africa, but there is a touch of unreality in it. I would grant that Western culture can stimulate the creative process of indigenisation of the spirit of modernity, and also that technology carries with it the idea of secular rationality and the cultural ferment to which the gospel of Christ gave birth. But those who hope that the growth of industrialisation and urbanisation with their accompanying secularisation will in the near future create a new ethos which will displace the religious and metaphysical *Weltanschauung* of traditional societies are likely to be disappointed. Radical Westernisation of culture may be possible for isolated individuals living in a non-Western culture or for some very backward cultures, but it is not practical for a whole traditional advanced culture. Nor do I think it would be a healthy pattern. I cannot believe that secularism and technology will remain human and enhance humanity unless they are accompanied by a sense of the transcendent and the mystery of the self-transcendence of the human person; and unless they have some religious or ontological basis for affirming that the essence of man is personal. The functional must be placed within the context of the personal. There is no doubt, great need to criticise and reject much of traditional myth, religion, and metaphysics. But we may need the contribution of some myth, religion and metaphysics to develop a framework of meaning and power within which persons with the modern spirit of individuality, historical dynamism and secularism can find their human fulfilment.

The future of the struggle for a modern ethos in non-Western lands lies ultimately with the indigenous movements which are seeking to transform traditional cultures from within; and I believe also that the struggle for a common ethos for the world community requires a common consciousness of the spiritual crisis in the cultures of all six continents and a common effort to meet it with the resources of all cultures which are in a process of creative renewal.

Christianity as a humble but significant partner

The struggle for a new humanism and a common culture which will be informed by it and will motivate the remaking of traditional societies is being waged by three types of modern movements. In Asia and Africa these have an indigenous character today, in that they are closely allied with the *cultural* dynamic of nationalism and nation-building.

First, there are the movements inspired by ideas of secular humanism with either a scientific, liberal or socialist emphasis. Second, are the movements oriented to the reform and renewal of traditional religion, metaphysics and systems of ethics ; these emphasize the dynamic aspects of traditional humanism and seek to give indigenous cultural roots to modern humanism by forming a synthesis of the two. Third, is Christianity which expresses Christian humanism in evangelistic and service enterprises, and in the development of congregations which are more than mere traditional ethnic groups. I am speaking particularly of those forms of Western Christianity which are more closely related to cultural modernity than to traditionalism, and of the Churches which continue this tradition. I am looking at these movements as cultural movements of modern humanism, though they are more than that : they are also faiths, and as such, each has its own apprehension of ultimate reality which shapes its idea of man and his destiny. At this point, they are different from each other and mutually exclusive. But together they are involved in a common struggle to modernise traditional social structures and also to develop a common culture which expresses the idea of a social humanism and provides motive and dynamic for the new structures. Obviously a culture built by men of many religions and secular faiths cannot be integrated as a whole with any one of them. In this sense, faith and culture find integration in persons and not in common institutions. It is this that makes the new culture pluralistic and secular, and open. It is united by the common social task and common loyalty to a community of values expressing common basic insights and assumptions about man and society, with of course differences in emphasis arising from ultimate differences of faith. The community of values and insights which form the common cultural ethos is nourished by a continuing dialogue between persons who have different commitments of faith. We therefore work not for a Christian culture but for an open secular pluralistic culture informed by, and open to, the insights of many faiths, including the Christian faith. Many questions can be raised here. Can such a culture have stability ? Can it acquire the dynamic to defend itself against a fanatic religious faith or secular ideology which seeks to destroy the plurality and to dominate the culture ? The answer depends on the strength of the common commitment to the spirit of modernity and the dynamic of faith men repeatedly bring to reinforce that commitment. Christians have a special role to play at this point.

In the non-Western World, and especially in Asia, the movements of secular humanism and the reform movements of traditional non-Christian religions and cultures generally speaking have a more massive influence on nation-building and show greater cultural creativity than does Christianity. However, this cannot be the total measure of the cultural significance of Christianity in these lands, for in the final analysis the Christian message (though not Christianity itself) has historically been a basic determining element in the spiritual ferment which has produced the movement of modernisation, and which requires the gospel for its spiritual fulfilment. Christianity can accept the number three place in the cultural awakening in traditional societies because it knows full well that the Christian ferment is greater than Christianity and that it has often existed in the West in radical protest against, and even rejection of, Christianity and that in non-Christian lands it must be discerned in the total modern cultural awakening of peoples, including the renaissance of other religions and secular movements and ideologies. In fact, whatever the fundamental core of faith affirmed and reaffirmed by non-Christian religions and secular movements, insofar as they are actively involved in the social tasks and cultural awakening of modern humanism which has the ferment of the gospel at its core, they are in some sense at least within the Christian theological circle. The presence of the gospel and dialogue with the gospel are already present at their centre. This is what gives Christianity its significance in a secular pluralist culture and defines its mission to the total culture : to make the pressure of the gospel and the dialogue with it more real in all modernising movements thus enabling a further transformation of their humanism and their "theology" (if I may call it that) in the light of God's purpose for man as revealed in the divine humanity of Jesus Christ. Dr. Paul Devanandan never tired of emphasising this function of Christianity in Asian lands : it is the theme of his book *Christian Concern in Hinduism*. And similarly Bishop K. H. Ting in his *Christian Theism* has shown that it is possible to penetrate to the centre of Marxism with a view to lifting the debate between idealism and materialism within it to a new debate about the dimensions of spiritual self-transcendence of a genuine humanism.

All this should not be understood as building a syncretistic religion or faith. In fact, the unique Christian contribution to the inter-faith dialogue and the partnership in struggle for a common ethos depends on Christians continuing to proclaim the Christian Kerygma of the Per-

son of the Crucified and Risen Jesus Christ as the ultimate revelation and redeeming act of God in human history. It is the ferment of this unique faith which has brought about men's awakening to personality and history, to technology and social justice, and other aspects of the spirit of modernity, and that faith remains their ground. Religious syncretism is to be avoided not only for the sake of the purity of the gospel but also for the sake of the integrity of the human in a new culture. But religious syncretism should not be confused with the cultural syncretism which cannot be avoided in our contemporary struggle for a new cultural ethos conducive to modernisation. Dr. Visser 't Hooft once told me that I should use the phrase "cultural synthesis" rather than "cultural syncretism" to avoid confusion. He may be right, but for me synthesis implies a neat cultural integration which is not possible in this time of transition. Christians, like others, must live with fragments from many cultures which are not easily integrated, in the hope that a new cultural synthesis will eventually emerge around a new spiritual mission.

Here, I have already landed in the territory of theologians. So I must stop.

THE CHURCH AND REVOLUTION

by

HEINZ-DIETRICH WENDLAND

In the first part of his paper, Professor Wendland sketched the development of the concept of revolution ; political, social and total. He examined in some detail the opposition between the Marxist concept of absolute revolution and the view of Stahl that all revolutions are contrary to the will of God. He looked at the nature of the National Socialist revolution in Germany and identified the inadequacy of the response of the "Confessing Church" to that revolution.

EDITOR.

Tendencies toward total revolution in the world today

We have already referred to the total character of the revolutionary processes today. It is the revolution brought about by technology and science, by rationalism and the rapid spread of industrialisation. This revolution is seizing hold of every continent, upsetting all traditions and institutions, and eating its way into the oldest cultures. It is putting all the religions of the world to a test of unprecedented severity and compelling them to re-think their ethics and social ethic in the light of the new human and social situation. The struggle between the mythological language of the religions and the spirit of rationalism has entered a new stage, which may be decisive.

In the case of Asia and Africa, the Christian Church and its mission is one of the important causes of this revolution. For it was the Church which introduced the civilisation of Europe and America into those continents through its educational institutions, and which did much to form a new intellectual élite there. Here Christianity has had a positively revolutionary effect on the existing cultures and social systems. Only from time to time this process is held up and stabilised, for instance in the form of the "tribal churches" in Africa which correspond to some extent to the regional and national Churches in Europe, in the principle of linking Church and society. Today, however, these tribal churches are breaking up and being superseded by new forms of Christian community.

The most important elements in this "global" revolution are perhaps the following (it is only possible to mention a few of them here).

The first is the crisis in *the clan* and its partial dissolution under the influence of the western principle of individualism, involving the free choice of a marriage-partner based on affection ; this means a complete metamorphosis of the legal and social forms of marriage. The small family of modern times based on partnership is on the increase, especially in the African cities. The position of women is becoming freer and more independent, they are gradually being liberated from the domination of men, and can no longer be treated like goods and chattels.

The second element is the revolution in *agriculture* owing to the introduction of machinery and technical-scientific methods, such as the use of chemical fertilisers. This involves a change in man's attitude to the soil and to plants, seeds and harvest ; his attitude is now a rational one. The revolution in agriculture has also produced entirely new social structures, which are transforming village life and the old tribal systems.

The third element is the large number of new *forms of state* which are endeavouring to adopt western political ideas and constitutions. As a result they are torn between dictatorship and democracy. It is quite obvious that in places where there is absolutely no basis for democracy either in culture or in education (not even the capacity to read, write or count), it is artificial to transfer the constitutional forms of democracy, and impossible for them to work.

The fourth element is the ideological influences that come from the West, and which are very strong. This is particularly apparent in the outbursts of *nationalism* in Asia and Africa. Although the European idea of the nation and of national freedom is based on entirely different historical and social conditions, nationalism has had revolutionary effects in transforming society, and (so far, at any rate) has been the strongest ferment in the new state-systems. Without the integrating force of the concept of the nation, it would be impossible to break down the tribal barriers and to overcome the great social and cultural differences within the new states. (This is also the view of many Christians who are politically active in those continents). Without the idea of the nation it would also be impossible to train an élite capable of assuming political responsibility.

The fifth element (which is the basic problem) is the question of *the whole new order of society* and the position of men and women within that society. The necessity of giving the state a great deal of initiative

and scope in setting up the new economic system causes the appearance of the idea of national socialism in various forms, and attempts to set up a more or less socialistic economic and social system. It remains to be seen how many of these experiments will prove valuable permanently.

These experiments are often connected with the secular-religious idea of a collective solution, or a "social" redemption, in which Christian, Marxist and ancient pagan elements are all mixed up in an extraordinary syncretism. The number of prophets, saviours and sects is simply inconceivable. Many of them do not last long and have very few adherents.

The old world-religions — Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism — are compelled in this world-situation to rethink their own ethics and social ethics, to adapt them or (in the case of Buddhism) to think them out for the first time. In doing so the non-Christian religions borrow considerably from Christianity. For it seems as if the ideas of freedom, humanity, justice, social and political peace, a decent human society and social equality are indispensable for building up the new states and social units. All these ideas were coined in the West. Attempts must therefore be made to link them up with their own ancient religious-ethical traditions, and to apply the authority of the old traditions to the new forms of thought and behaviour with as little disruption as possible.

This whole situation shows the total nature of the revolution which is sweeping over the whole world today and transforming it; not even the religions are immune from it. New forms of state, society and culture will arise from it. Its most important tendency is the trend to form a uniform civilisation and a uniform society all over the world.

Both in the developing countries and outside them, many Christians and many churches are dismayed, baffled and indecisive in face of the revolutionary changes taking place there. This is shown in Karl Heinz Pfeffer's instructive book *Welt im Umbruch* (Güttersloh, 1966). This attitude of anxious uncertainty is connected with the lack of any modern social ethic and of a Christian understanding of revolution, both in the positive and in the critical sense. The traditional background of church thinking (whether "Obrigkeitsstaat," democracy, economic liberalism, or conservative "community"-ideology, etc.) excludes a social ethic which is realistic and relevant, and is an obstacle to understanding the world-wide social revolution of our time.

In face of this highly dangerous negative or helpless attitude, which makes it impossible to take appropriate action, the following demands must be made to the Churches :

1. A comprehensive critical understanding of the world-wide revolution of our time, its tendencies and forces, must be worked out, in cooperation between Christian ethics and all the other competent sciences ;
2. In this connection a theological theory of revolution is especially important (the present study indicates its approach).
3. Through criticism of all the liberal, socialist, conservative and reactionary theories and ideologies about society and revolution will help to prepare the ground for tackling the tasks mentioned above.
4. Over and above theological-socioethical theory, the Churches must be guided by an open-minded policy of solidarity with the world which (with special concern for the plight of man) tackles the problems of the *new* order and the *world-wide* order of society. These problems are being raised everywhere today wherever the revolutionary process is going on. First and foremost what is needed is Christian courage, which faces the future and its tasks freely and frankly.
5. In order for the Church to act in this way, it is essential for it to clarify the pattern and to see what form it should assume in future, i.e. the pattern of the responsible society which judges all situations and orders by the socio-ethical norms of freedom, justice, partnership (Mitmenschlichkeit) and peace.
   This applies also to Christians in the countries of rapid social change. Only a very small minority are frankly facing the situation and taking ethical action in social and political affairs ; while a large majority are helpless, unfree and indecisive, and need to change their mentality completely if they are to obey the Commandment to love their neighbour *today*.

The revolutionary element in the Christian message

We must now examine the revolutionary element in the Christian message itself, and its influence on human history. From the theological aspect, this is the crucial question. If human history today has become

revolutionary in character, the question then arises: what is the connection between the revolutionary element in the Christian message and revolution in history? Are they antagonistic to one another? Do they run in two entirely different dimensions — one spiritual, the other secular? (In this case our problem might be solved on the lines of the traditional Lutheran doctrine of the Two Kingdoms.) Or is it possible to combine the two? Let us examine these questions more closely.

PAUL TILLICH is the first, and almost the only, important theologian who has recognised the problem and devoted his attention to it [1]. He begins his study (quite rightly) with the eschatological expectation of the Early Church, which lived in expectation of the coming of the Kingdom of God all over the world. This Kingdom has already become present in history through Jesus Christ and in the form of his Church. It is changing and transforming this human world already here and now and leading it towards the New Creation at the End of Time. The Kingdom of God not only affects the individual and the inner life, ethics and religion of men; it affects the whole *world* of men, understood as a totum in time and space, without any exception. There is nothing material nor external which is not affected by this fact of the Kingdom of God. The universalism of the rule of God embraces His whole creation, liberating it from sin and death and leading it towards its consummation. For the issue is God's rule over the world.

The Kingdom presents a challenge to the present constitution and form of this world, in so far as it is not in accordance with the holy, life-giving will of God, but is dominated by sin and death. But the purpose of God's challenge to the world is not to set up an entirely new political régime and a perfect social order which would eliminate poverty, injustice and oppression; it is rather to penetrate the whole world with the divine justice and love which are united in God and His rule. The will of God is directed towards the human person and the human heart, urging men to repent and to be transformed into sons and heirs of God and His Kingdom. But this action affects the whole of human life, including politics and society and history, so that there is no duality between body and spirit, inward and outward, man and the world. Ethical and social trends are therefore immanent in the coming of the Kingdom of God. At the same time they are the result and expression of that Kingdom.

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[1] Especially in his analyses of Marxism, published in Vol. II of his collected works: "Christentum und soziale Gestaltung", Stuttgart, 1962 (new edition).

These ethical and social trends express themselves through the Church of Christ in history, which not only believes and hopes in its existence in the world, but also acts by giving *service* in the *love* of Christ, and recognises all men as its neighbours. The Church regards its mission to the world, therefore, not merely as a mission (although this remains fundamental) but also as responsibility for man — especially for those in poverty and distress. As the epiphany of God's grace and glory, His Kingdom is always something far more than moral action, or than an ethical community created by moral action; it transcends and breaks through all ethical norms, ideas and social factors. Nevertheless the force and effect of social ethics is immanent in this Kingdom; in accordance with its nature, it takes up the struggle with all forms of injustice, misery and oppression among mankind. It strives to restore man in his truth and humanity, in face of all the innumerable travesties and perversions of human nature which actually exist.

In this way, therefore, the rule of God *indirectly* has social and political repercussions, not by stirring up rebellion, not by the use of political and military force, but solely through the "quiet," unarmed, loving action and service of Christian groups scattered all over the world, and yet united in Christ.

The aim of these remarks is to draw the line against Christian *utopianism* and *chiliasm*, which believes in restoring Christ's Kingdom in this world through Christian action. But it is not the Christian Church which builds up Christ's Kingdom of life and grace, although it undoubtedly makes use of Christ's followers and endows them with the full authority of the Holy Spirit for their action. In this world and in its history Christ's Kingdom continues to struggle with sin, the flesh and death; it is therefore not completed. Only at the End of history will God consummate His Kingdom, through Christ. However, the challenging presence of God's Kingdom within history gives the latter its aim and end, constantly gives it fresh impetus and disturbs its course. Under the influence of eschatology, the world is constantly changing, although the victory of Christ is still concealed. It is therefore an eschatological ethos which confronts the situation in the world, challenging it with the power of love, which transforms itself creatively to meet the different times and situations.

Through its prophecy of the End, and through its radical challenge, this ethos destroys all myths of the origin which worship and invoke the powers of the past — origin, life, blood and procreation. It also

does away with the isolated belief in the creation which equates "this" world with God's creation and falls a prey to the illusion that the pure life-giving forces of Paradise are available and can be allowed to flow unchecked. It is Christ alone who unlocks the gates of Paradise and shows the way to eternal life.

So the Kingdom of God is the imperfect Kingdom struggling in history with the weapons of love and of the Holy Spirit. It suffers innumerable defeats through the unbelief and sin of men, through the meagre faith and the cowardice of Christians ; but it remains invincible, because it lives through Christ's presence in the world, which no power of this world can remove. It is therefore the fundamental Christian paradox of death and resurrection, of victory through defeat, of triumph in apparent failure, which also decides the character of the eschatological ethic. The innumerable prophets who have prophesied the end of Christianity have all proved to be false prophets. Even if millions of people believe what they say, they will always be false prophets.

Arthur Rich also follows the basic ideas of the eschatological, world-transforming ethos in his way. On the one hand he does not accept the concept of "absolute" revolution nor the way in which it sets up man as the measure of all things. On the other hand, however, he understands *being-a-Christian as revolutionary living* for the sake of love and justice, and in order to preserve the humanity of man. Maintenance of the status quo, laissez-faire, compromising with circumstances, are denials of the critical-revolutionary nature of Christian life. "Consequently the eschatology of the Christian faith releases a revolutionary humanity (Menschlichkeit)." [1]

This revolutionary, Christian existence does not aim at a "social order of a final character." The love of the Christian faith is no anti-revolutionary ; it strives for concrete improvement within the relative and the historical ; it therefore transposes the love of Christ (Agape) into humanity. So A. Rich comes to a revolutionary Christian humanism which is not utopian and not absolute. He deliberately and rightly goes further than the theological ethic which had hitherto existed, which had not adequately recognised the problem of revolution because it was not derived from the Coming Kingdom of God and from His righteousness, which places commitments upon men [2].

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[1] ARTHUR RICH : "Glaube in politischer Entscheidung," Zürich, 1962, page 96.
[2] ARTHUR RICH : "Glaube in politischer Entscheidung," Zürich, 1962, page 97.

It is now for us to follow the way indicated by P. Tillich and A. Rich. Let us therefore now examine the *social-theological approach* of revolutionary Christian humanism.

First of all this approach (as already briefly explained) must be understood *eschatologically*. This means: the Kingdom of God comes into the world with the commandment of justice and with the gift of love, the love which serves and which transforms through service. For the sake of man and his future in history, the active Christian community strives for freedom, justice and humanity, although these values cannot attain perfection in their institutional form. But a single drop of humanity and justice is worth infinetely more than the heartless laisser-faire of inhumanity and injustice. All human institutions are transformable; they are not fixed, immutable quantities. The Kingdom of God's righteousness is already at work here and now in the action of the Church, improving the institutions of society and constantly confronting them with the norm of God's justice and love.

This task is the office of "secular Christians," i.e. of all those Christians who are carrying out their functions and professions in society, in the state, in economic and cultural life. They therefore have a vocation entrusted to them by God in the service of the *societas semper reformanda*: to reform and improve the institutions of society. It is not for Christians to ask whether their action is very successful or not, nor whether its effect is long or short. They must carry out the vocation with which God has entrusted them of service to man and to society, in each historical situation. They must seek out suffering and distress and remove them, especially those forms which are deeply concealed. As the servants (Diakone) of the world, they are the pioneers of all social reform.

Secondly, this social-theological approach must be understood *anthropologically*. In his being-in-the-world, man (in spite of his sin) is the creature of God, and has been appointed by God Himself as His cooperator, and endowed with creative faculties. This is the source of man's infinite power over the world. Man is the administrator who organises and reforms the state, the economy, society. It is through his intelligence that man is able to do this, to observe his environment, to analyse it and to change it; but man's intelligence cannot liberate him from sin and death (as Luther pointed out). In matters affecting "the world," however, man's intelligence has full authority and is entitled to take action. This anthropological concept of our social-ethical approach must, of course, immediately be extended and also limited:

owing to their eschatological and spiritual existence, the Christian (and the Christian Church) has the vocation and task to love the world and to give it service. This vocation is linked up with man's creative task as the "cooperator dei," although it has a different origin because it is derived from the Kingdom of Christ. It is the union between these two vocations which produces the fertility of Christian action, and its unique power in history.

Thirdly, the social-ethical approach must be understood and evaluated from the aspect of *the ethos of action*. By this I mean the duty of Christians (and especially of Christian service-groups) to cooperate in state and society, particularly to reform social institutions. Christians are not solely responsible, but they do share responsibility. State and society are not the creations of the Christian faith (they are rather independent, and have their own justification); but Christians *share* responsibility for social and political institutions and forms.

It should also be stressed here that the attitude of Christians to their environment should be both *positive* and *initial*. For they are in solidarity with all the people who exercise the same political, social or economic functions as themselves. However, this solidarity is at the same time critical, because Christians are bound to protest against all forms of injustice and inhumanity. This critical solidarity expresses itself in the *readiness* of Christians to consider any opportunities for change which point the way to the future. Readiness to envisage the future of society is part of the contribution which Christians must make in society. This attitude of readiness is derived from the faith that God Himself holds the door open for human history to go forward to the future, and that this presents many new opportunities for organising and shaping society.

Christians therefore have freedom to *plan* both in small matters and in large ones, because if their action were split up into individual efforts it would lose its effectiveness. It is the general plan which determines what separate steps are taken.

Fourthly, the extremely important question of the *pattern* for Christian action in serving the state and society must be examined. We mean a historical pattern which can actually be attained — not an unreal Utopia — a pattern for which the actual situation really offers a genuine basis both in the opportunities latent within it and in its crises and inadequacies. Ever since the WCC Assemblies at Amsterdam (in 1948) and Evanston (in 1954) the ecumenical movement has tried to provide

a pattern of this kind with the slogan "the responsible society." [1] This pattern indicates a decent, humane society with democratic institutions, whose norms are freedom, justice, humanity and peace. This presupposes that the men and women living in that society are free persons with a sense of responsibility towards God and towards their fellow-men, who are called to cooperate freely and responsibly in state and society. An élite of persons and nations must lay the foundation of this "responsible society" of the future, which is already beginning to appear today. This élite, in its turn, must create the bases for democratic states and societies, in places where they do not yet exist (or have only just begun to appear), such as Asia, Africa and South America.

With the ethic of a revolutionary Christian humanism of this kind we are at the same time fulfilling the heritage of the revolutionary Christian groups of the English Revolution and of Puritanism. For those groups regarded God's sacred covenant with men in the form of the Christian Church as the prototype and basis for the social covenant between men. The freedom of God's children in the Church (based on eschatological and spiritual reasons) must find expression in the political and social freedom and equality of the members of state and society. Free Christians must be free citizens. This connection sets in motion the political and social action of the Church, the aim of which is the democratic society of freedom and equality for all men.

Admittedly, some restrictions must be drawn here. The Kingdom of God does not become identical with society as a result of Christian action; secular freedom must be preserved, and the state and society must retain their own independent form. Christians are therefore not carrying out a "Christian revolution"; they are working with secular, human methods of justice and politics to reform society for the sake of man. Christians therefore remain within the limits imposed on them in this world. They do not set up any "Christian" orders, systems, states and societies; for their task is to *humanise* the secular orders [2], and the slightest real progress that can be attained there is more important than the most perfect Christian Utopia, because it guarantees real help

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[1] Cf. the explanation and extension of this concept in H. D. WENDLAND: "Der Begriff der verantwortlichen Gesellschaft in seiner Bedeutung für die Sozialethik der Ökumene." Zeitschrift für Evangelische Ethik, 1965, Volume I, page 1 ff.

[2] On these aims cf. the instructive essay by P. BRUNNER: "Unsere Verantwortung für die Menschlichkeit der Gesellschaft und für das Recht." Pro Ecclesia, Vol. II (?), Berlin 1966, p. 180 ff. We fully agree with the basic ideas in this essay.

to definite people or social groups. However, although secular order may appear to be Christian, this is only a deceptive veneer. The word "Christian" can be applied only to the action of Christians who are constantly transposing love into secular humanity. The problem of the *relationship* between Christian, revolutionary action and the politico-social, revolutionary action of men in history has still to be faced.

After what has been said above it is clear that this question of the *relationship* can no longer be answered negatively. A responsible relationship (which is both positive and critical) with the dynamic-revolutionary society of today is possible only if Christians are given an opportunity to understand both in theory and in practice all the chances of transforming society. But here some critical remarks must be made. Christians must not be guided by the ideology of the absolute revolution, nor by the Utopia of the perfect society. It means also that they cannot advocate revolutionizing the whole situation by force ; they have to take the course of *reform*. If Christians exclude the use of *power*, especially military power, from their world-transforming action, this does not mean that they believe in the possibility of a society or a state which is entirely devoid of power and has no system of authority. Christians are not striving for a Utopia of this kind. Humanity and order in society cannot be maintained without the use of power. But that power must be controlled, must be subject to definite norms, and must be used to promote the general aim of "humanizing" society, improving jusuice, and establishing social and international peace. The exercise of power and the conduct of those entrusted with power must be governed by the norms of humanity, freedom and justice. If this is done, the use of force will become superfluous, and simultaneously the "prophylactic" transformation of society will eliminate those social and political causes which might have necessitated the use of force.

Here the question immediately arises : does not this mean *abandoning* the revolutionary ethic, about which we have talked so much ? The answer to this question must stress the fact, that a strong relationship must be maintained between the separate reforms to be realised and our ultimate aim. For this is the only way to guarantee the meaning and the fruitfulness of the separate reforms and to keep the *general*-transformation in mind. The action of Christians will then avoid being split-up and fragmentary. It is only in separate measures that the general plan can become real and visible ; on the other hand, those separate measures derive their power and their truth only from the general plan

as a whole. Separate measures and part-reforms must therefore always be subordinated to the general aim, and measured by that norm. This will ensure that Christian revolutionary humanism does not degenerate into a purely opportuned "reformism" with separate measures. It will remain revolutionary provided that it keeps in mind *the new order of society as a whole*. But in contrast to the ideology of the absolute revolution, this order of society is "new" only in the relative, historical sense; it does not emerge from history, nor does it profess to set an end to history. The general-order is new, however, in the sense of a new epoch within history, new motives and a new kind of interplay between the political forces and the social groups. The absolute newness of the Utopia which claims to be the embodiment of the absolute revolution is an illusion. It therefore does not deserve the honourable name of "revolution." *Genuine* revolution is always related to real history (instead of escaping from it), and introduces into history a new epoch with a new kind of social order.

A clear distinction must therefore be drawn between Christian revolutionary humanism and the following:

1. "Reformism" with its disjointed efforts, which have no central aim;
2. total revolution which tends to regard man as the measure of all things;
3. a conservative mentality expressed in a pseudo-Christian equation of the world with God's creation (Paradise);
4. the whole negative reactionary attitude of extreme opposition to the idea of total revolution.

The truth of the Christian humanism described above lies in the following:

1. in its historicity, i.e. in its actual impact on its historical context
2. in its concentration on those aims of contemporary society which can be implemented;
3. in the ethos of responsible actions based on love and justice;
4. in deriving this ethos from the eschatological expectation of God's coming Kingdom, which is already present in history;
5. in the love which transforms itself daily into practical measures of help and reform for the benefit of man.

Then the problem of "Church and revolution" raised at the beginning may be solved as follows.

The Church's mission in and to the world leads first to revolutionary, social-ethical action in the sense described above. Thus the Church itself becomes the source of constant revolutionary changes in state and society. Rooted as it is in the eschatological-revolutionary power of the Christian message, the Church's attitude to the historical revolution is both positive and critical. On the one hand the Church accepts that revolution ; on the other hand it transcends it by rejecting all forms of Utopian ideology. Unlike radical Natural Law, because the Church is not able to dispose of God's creation, but must see it in the light of historicity, it perceives the opportunities for relevant action within contemporary social institutions.

We have thus indicated the kind of social-theological approach which enables the Church of Christ not only to stand firm in face of the total revolution of our time, and thus to act as a brake on the whole revolutionary process, but also to meet the challenge of that revolution both positively and critically, or even to *supersede* it by means of revolutionary Christian action to create a new social order on the pattern of the responsible society.

Lastly, the crucial theological question must be raised : what is the attitude of this social-theological approach to the Gospel as the message of the New Testament ?

Firstly, it is evident that our position has nothing to do with a fundamentalistic approach to the New Testament, with its legalistic implications.

Secondly, it is clear that we cannot transpose the eschatological message of the coming of God's Kingdom (in Jesus Christ and in his Church) into the social-moral Utopia of the Christian society. We have to maintain the distinction between the Kingdom of God and this world, and to bear in mind the conflict between that Kingdom and sin and death.

Thirdly, what has been said above shows that we reject the attitude of eschatological passivity, i.e. the idea of the Church's waiting passively and making no attempt to change the world. In our view, this kind of waiting is a misinterpretation of the eschatological hope.

Fourthly, from the coming of God's Kingdom, and from the spiritual character of Christ's Church, we deduce the right to use Christian *freedom* in the world, i.e. to undertake free Christian action upon the world — action which relates itself to the social structures and their essential transformation through love.

This also means, however, that within the spiritual continuity of the Church we must also take account of the *discontinuity* of the times. As Christians *we* must act in today's world with its technological civilisation and its dynamic industrialism, a world entirely different from that of late antiquity and of the Apostles. If we acted differently, that would mean that Christians were condemning themselves to un-freedom and preventing themselves from acting in accordance with the needs of the situation and of men today. This would be a complete contradiction of their eschatological-spiritual freedom ; it would completely obstruct any application of Christian ethics to the present day. That cannot be the meaning of faith, love and hope. We cannot fulfil our obedience to God's act of salvation in Christ either by merely reciting the New Testament message or by imitating the ethics of the New Testament. We have to preserve faith, hope and love in the freedom of the Holy Spirit today in our contemporary society, trusting in the presence of Christ in and with the world. It is the freedom of faith and love which is the source of our freedom to serve contemporary man, and to shape our society today.

THE CHALLENGE AND RELEVANCE OF THEOLOGY TO THE SOCIAL REVOLUTIONS OF OUR TIME

by

VITALY BOROVOY

I hesitated a long time before committing myself to write this address. When I learnt that I was to speak after the addresses of such expert and well-known specialists as Professor Richard Shaull, and Professor H. D. Wendland I realized that I would be in a very difficult position. On the one hand I cleary saw what a great impression these addresses would produce on everyone both by their profound analyses and by the bold presentation of new problems. On the other hand I recognized all my own weakness, after a long and severe illness. Still, I am used to doing my duty, and so when the leadership of the conference instructed me to give a short address on this theme I considered myself obliged, even in unfavourable circumstances, to witness to that Living Truth, which is characteristic of my Church, firmly believing and hoping that the Truth will speak for itself. However, apart from belief in Truth, which of course I know is characteristic of us all as Christians, I have a personal reason for being so bold as to speak to this expert Christian gathering after these expert addresses.

I was convinced that each of these first two addresses would have its own distinctive characteristics, its individual peculiarities, its own specific character, clearly differentiating it from the other. This is a sign both of their strength and great value but also of their weakness and inadequacy, for Christian truth is by its very nature one and entire, though diverse and pluralistic in its expressions in the life and conciousness of men. That means that there is a place for my address also, with its specific character and peculiarities. In this specific and particular field, I dare to say that I do feel competent, for I am going to treat our main theme "The challenge and relevance of theology to the social revolution of our time" from the point of view of an Orthodox theologian, a member of the Russian Orthodox Church which has lived for almost

half a century in the conditions of the social revolution which lies at the root of almost all the social revolutions of our time. Here our competence is clear and indisputable. It is one thing to describe theoretically or to consider in a series of academic discussions, in an armchair, by a comfortable fireside, in the quiet atmosphere of library or study, the "challenge and relevance of theology in an age of social revolution"; it is quite another thing to live under those conditions, to experience their consequences for oneself, to do theology and to live a life of witness to Christ in a socialist and secularized society.

I think that the impartial judgment of history gives us the right to say that our Church has stood the test, which has lasted almost half a century, of her competence in the realm of our main theme; and that in the life and witness of her faithful members she has exhibited the challenge and relevance of theology to the social revolutions of our time.

My colleague at the Leningrad Theological Academy, Professor Archpriest Voronov, has given you his paper on "The bases of social ethics in the conditions of Soviet reality from the Orthodox point of view," as a contribution to our general discussion on this conference. Here he shows our Soviet reality as it is reflected in the life and consciousness of our society, taken as a single moral and political unit.

This paper is available to all in an English translation, prepared by the Department of Foreign Affairs of the Moscow Patriarchate, which gives me the right to pass directly to the immediate theme of my address on "The challenge and relevance of theology to the social revolutions of our time."

First we must explain the meaning of our basic terms in the formulation of the theme — the sense in which we speak here of revolution and of a theology of revolutions.

For a long time past a dense atmosphere of dangerous ambiguity has surrounded the word "revolution." It has been used too often in different senses; it has been misused too often for completely different and sometimes even contradictory ends. Some Christians fear it, and prefer either not to use it at all, or to use it only to characterize phenomena of which they disapprove. But that is unrealistic. This word has become too popular and too commonplace; it has become too much a part and parcel of contemporary man for it to be possible to abolish it or to give it a single and anti-Christian and negative sense with one stroke of the pen. On the other hand many Christians gladly use this term in

the sense of the simple but gradual creation of a new society without any radical breaking with the past. Let us take revolution in the broadest sociological sense of the word. Revolution is a radical break, the overturning of relationships, the restructuring of life, reconstruction. In a more organic sense, it is renewal, regeneration, new life. We speak of the technical revolution, the language revolution, the moral revolution, the revolution of daily life in the recent centuries of our history. But we also speak of the revolution which Christianity brought into the world. In this use of the word you can sense already a wide variety of nuances. Under "revolution" we include the mechanical, organic and spiritual meanings.

On the other hand all these "revolutionary" processes differ one from another in degree of sharpness, of tempo of development and of violence of their break with the past.

The essential thing is the radical renewal — the new life which does not intend to continue the old life, but rather to finish with it in order to press on into the future.

First let us take revolution in this, its broadest sense, apply it to all spheres of cultural, social and political life, and ask ourselves what is the relationship of Christianity to revolution.

The answer, it seems to me, admits of no doubt. Renewal, new life — these are fundamentally Christian concepts. The ancient world lived with the idea of the perfect circle, the eternal return and the subordination of being to natural laws. Christianity, having declared war on natural life as contaminated by sin, summons man to a completely new, supernatural order of being — the Kingdom of Heaven. And on the threshold of this Kingdom it confronts him with the demand for repentance. "Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." "Repent" — "metanoete" — means change your mind, be born again spiritually. The "birth by the Spirit," of which St. John's Gospel speaks, is a stronger ontological expression of this fact. The conversion of the great saints — of Paul and Augustine, and of many ascetics who renounced the world — these are evidence of a spiritual revolution brought about for the sake of a higher and nobler type of man in Christianity. Christian life begins in crisis ; it also continues in crisis. Repentance is not a single act, but a permanent state. The power of sin is not overcome at one go ; it keeps on demanding new efforts, new renunciations. There arises the continual need for new breaks with the power of sin — new spiritual revolutions and changes of direction. This is the Christian direction

— forwards and upwards — as expressed by Paul in the well-known words, "Forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead" (Phil. 3. 13).

All this is gladly accepted at the individual level. The strange thing is that as soon as we start to talk about social renewal, Christians begin to hedge, shunning responsibility and struggle, sometimes openly defending a social sin, simply because an evil which has existed for centuries or even millenia acquires the charm of a tradition.

Of all Christian cultures Byzantium is the one which contributed most of all to the mere sanctification of social evil. It took over without objection the entire social inheritance of the pagan world and gave it a sacral anointing. The Civil Law of the pagan Roman Empire was preserved in the guise of ecclesiastical tradition for thousands of years in Byzantium and medieval Europe, and for centuries in Russia from the time (16th century) when our country began to regard itself as the heir of Byzantium.

But that is radically opposed to the social tradition of early Christianity and the Greek fathers, the messianic preaching of our Saviour and the whole content of the teaching of the Old Testament prophets, which never grows old. No ! Revealed religion in Israel and the early Church was social and revolutionary first ; it became individualist and static later. The Kingdom of God was the Kingdom of the people of God before it became a Kingdom in the soul of each individual man. Our age is called to establish a balance between the personal and social ethics of Christianity. It is sinful to pander to one's own psychosomatic nature. But it is equally sinful to bow down to evil and sinful social nature. Repentence — that is to say a radical change of mind, a radical break with the former way of life, a radical repudiation of the old, sinful ways, and equally a radical acceptance and engagement of one's whole self in the new and perfect life, i.e. all that we mean by revolution — this kind of repentence, this kind of revolution applies not only to the individual but also to the whole of society, to the nation, to the class, to every social group.

Repentence is a call to renewal, to revolution, to new life — for every separate individual and for society as a whole. Thus Christianity is by its very nature revolutionary ; and the new life required by Christian social ethics is more radical, more profoundly revolutionary, more novel than any other social system or doctrine, which has grown up outside Christianity.

The traditional nature of Christianity and its respect for tradition should mean fidelity to good tradition, not to bad. The Christian re-evaluation of values always applies to relative values and does not encroach on absolute principles. Idolatry of the new as such, even if it is worse than the old, is foreign to Christianity. We are for the new, if it is better than the old. But it would be truer to put it like this. Christians are neither for the new nor for the old but for the eternal. However, the eternal cannot be incarnate in the temporal other than by the eternal creation of new forms which pass over into new qualities, by the eternal renewal of new forms, by revolution.

Yet if Christianity is by its very nature revolutionary, and if the early Christian communities were social in their life, structure and teaching, still the situation is quite different, as soon as we look at theology as a system and the Church as an historical institution. Systematic theology and the historic churches have never been on the side of revolution for the simple reason that they have been prisoners of a cosmocentric view of reality, prisoners of a static view of social order, as established once and for all on earth.

It is only in the last few decades, during which the most profound changes have occurred in philosophical, scientific and theological thinking — a kind of revolution — as a result of the anthropocentric view of the world, the evolutionary view of the universe and the re-evaluation of the whole history of mankind — only after all this, has it become possible to work out a theology of development and of revolution.

Although these efforts are new, they imply a return to the Bible, and to the early Christian Gospel. In this context the new theology of revolution and development has overthrown earlier concepts of the sacral nature of any status quo, as being fundamentally opposed to the biblical message about God, who revolutionizes history through the incarnation of the Logos, through the Easter joy of triumph over evil, through the Church of the incarnate word, through the sanctification by the Holy Spirit of everyone and of everything, leading mankind to the realization of the Kingdom of God. How, after all this, can Christians consider it right to stand aside from the revolutionary processes in the history of mankind ? Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox theology have already done much work on this question — among Catholics, especially E. Mounier, among Protestants Lehmann and Shaull, among Orthodox, Exemplarsky, Titlinov, Berdjayev, Fedoroff and others. The ecumenical movement as a whole, especially the World Council of Churches and

the Second Vatican Council, is the best witness to the recognition of the necessity, of the demands and of the relevance of theology to the social revolutions of our time.

However, these attempts should be qualified as being only a start, indeed a tentative and uncertain start.

The experience of life of our Russian Orthodox Church, in the circumstances of the completely secularized and socialist society which is the fruit of the greatest social revolution in the history of man — this experience of our Church can be not only an enrichment of the total Christian experience but also a challenge to our Western Christian brethren. It challenges all Christians to heed the experience of our Church in their relationship to the social revolution of our time. Our Church, in the persons of part of its hierarchy and part of its clergy, went through all the stages of rejection, opposition and even direct action against the revolution and the changes it brought to the life of the Church. This was no mere theoretical rejection or passive non-participation. It was a bitter and open struggle. As a result, the Church lost millions of believers. Already well before the revolution, as well as during the revolution itself, large numbers of the revolutionary intelligentsia, workers and youth, left the Church and broke with Christianity. But the victorious revolution went its difficult way of consolidation and development without the Church. At the same time, the overwhelming majority of the masses of believers, who remained true to Christianity and the Church, — what we call the "people of God" — became a constructive element in the building of the new society on the new revolutionary bases, and thus an example to the clergy and hierarchy, who had not welcomed the revolution. This helped our entire clergy and hierarchy to unite their fate and life with the life of the people and to come to terms with had happened. Our Western Christian brethren may and should draw from this a lesson for themselves.

Christians should boldly, honourably and actively join in the building of the new life, based on social justice; they should bring a Christian social fervour to the social revolutions of our time and thus avert the de-Christianisation of the contemporary world. This in its turn cannot fail to have an effect on the very nature of the social revolutions. New in its form, but biblical in its content, the theology of development and revolution will have a positive influence on the course of history and on the thinking of the new revolutionary and socialist societies. This theology can and should raise a whole series of questions about the

ultimate meaning of the world process, manifesting by word and deed what is good, genuine, eternal and absolute in biblical Christianity as revealed by God. It should help the social revolutions of our time in their ultimate fulfilment and significance to be in accordance with the will of God and to serve the finality of Jesus Christ in an age of universal history.

This kind of challenge and relevance of theology to the social revolutions of our time is not just a distant possibility; the experience of our Church shows that it can be a real fact.

The very existence of our Church with its millions of believers who are active builders of socialism, sets secular society the task of rethinking the role and significance of Christianity in the future, for God has said "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life... Without me you can do nothing." In this lies our hope and confidence for the future of the Church in this age of social revolutions.

HOW THE CHURCH CONTRIBUTES TO THE TRANSFORMATION OF SOCIETY

by

EUGENE CARSON BLAKE

There are some people, even within the membership of the churches, who do not believe the Church can contribute to the transformation of society. They believe that any religious institution is altogether conservative, which is to say its value, if any, to society is to conserve the tradition which blesses and sanctifies the society as it is.

A living Church in any particular place, unless it is a protesting minority by tradition, does in fact perform a conservative function in its society and that is the chief reason most of its members and the community at large value it. But a living Christian Church performs another function too. It is a stimulus, a critic, an inspirer, a value setter of the society. It is this latter function that is the subject of this brief address.

How does a Christian Church contribute to the transformation of society ?

1. First of all through its regular services of the public worship of God. In all our traditions the scriptures are read ; thanksgiving, petition and intercession are voiced in prayer ; the sacraments are offered ; and God's praise is sung. In most churches there is the regular preaching and teaching from the Bible and sometimes this preaching is relevant to the real issues faced by the congregation, both as individuals and as a part of the community.

I mention this, first because some of us, in our anxiety to do better than we have done, forget how central to any relevance of the Church is its regular worship of God. If I did not believe this, I would have long since put my efforts into some more efficient institution for social transformation such as a school or a political party.

2. A second way the Church contributes to the transformation of society is by the formulation of concrete goals for society and concrete means to reach them in the light of the gospel. These may be formulated,

and are formulated at each level of the Church's structure from the local level to the world level. This is what we are doing here.

Pronouncements, studies, manifestos and the like often seem powerless. Their effect is seldom spectacular. I have heard for many years more criticism of the Churches and Councils making pronouncements than I have praise or appreciation. Nevertheless the public witness of the Church by public pronouncement does affect society, both immediately and in the long term. In 1952 when Senator McCarthy was at the height of his sinister power and influence in the United States ; before his fellow Senators found their courage to discipline him, when the other branches of government and even the universities were amazingly quiet, my own church, through the leadership of John Mackay, did in fact help bring about the end in the United States of that phase of the cold war, by a public pronouncement.

In 1966 it is clear that the statements of the World Council of Churches and of the National Council of Churches in my country are, even if as yet unsuccessful in determining policy, nevertheless an important contribution to that corrective criticism of United States foreign policy to keep it from runaway escalation.

In the long range, study documents and policy resolutions can make an incalculable difference. There is nothing so powerful as good and compelling ideas set down in language that is understood.

3. Again the Church contributes to the transformation of society by its pastoral care of its members who are in positions of influence and leadership in government, private institutions, and voluntary organizations. I know of no Church which has done this adequately. It is easier to criticize than to care. This pastoral work does not need to be restricted to the ordained clergy. But it is part of the calling of priest or minister and can be of vital significance.

4. Finally, the Church can contribute to the transformation of society by clearly identifying itself with the cause of the poor, the discriminated against, the alien, the prisoner, the rejected and the outcast. Most churches, as churches, do not do this very well. They are content to leave it to the occasional saint or prophet whom, as our Lord has indicated, they acknowledge and praise only after they are dead.

In a world such as ours the occasional production of an authentic saint is not enough. The Church as Church must act, take a stand, and march with those in the society who alone cannot win their battle for

justice, freedom, and equality. This is a risk. It results always in controversy. But if the Church is to live it dare not, in our kind of world, turn its back on God's poor. Youth in the Church are usually the first leaders. It was so in the civil rights revolution still going on in my country. Young people, boys and girls, began the sit-ins in lunch counters long before their elders, ministers and laymen, priests and nuns began to march and demonstrate. I am convinced that the putting of one's body in the right place and at the right time is often the only way that a Christian can help his Church to be a part of the transformation of society.

There is another battle going on in my country in which the churches are just beginning to become fully involved. It is the war against poverty. Closely tied into the race and civil rights problem, as yet we have not been able to make our churches generally see the moral issue that it is. I hope this conference and its reports will help us.

There are, however, a number of denominations who, with the Roman Catholic Church in many cities of the United States, are fully committing their financial resources, programmes and leadership to the mobilizing of the poor themselves in community action. Political power for the poor themselves — in many of our cities this is black power — is one important ingredient in the transformation of our society as more and more the city is the location of the struggle.

All of these ways of influence are costly. They cost money, sometimes even by the withholding of gifts by those who do not yet understand. But more, this influence is costly in sacrifice of time, and effort, and thought, and at the ultimate, of life itself. Comfortable American churches have been pained and surprised and troubled and inspired by the fact that we have had some authentic martyrs in our time. No normal man sets out to be a martyr. But sometimes simple integrity and love, more important even than courage, puts Christian bodies where the action is, and this is the way the Church contributes to the transformation of society.

THEOLOGICAL GUIDELINES FOR THE CHURCH'S INVOLVEMENT IN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS *

by

FREDRIK A. SCHIOTZ

The phrase "the Church's involvement in international affairs" presupposes that the Church should be involved in this aspect of life. This premise is challenged by some Christians. Presumably, this is a part of the concern for theological guidelines.

Christians who object to the Church's involvement in international affairs usually do so on the basis of Romans 13. 1-7. But the context of this section must not be overlooked. Beginning with Chapter 12, St. Paul launches an eloquent appeal for the redeemed person to invest his life in deeds of love. He becomes illustratively specific. In the 13th Chapter his specifications point to the Christian's relationship to the state. The first seven verses make it clear to the Christians in Rome that being a Christian does not exonerate a person from his responsibilities as a citizen of the state. Piety and faith are not an authorization for withdrawal from life.

Indeed, the responsibility of citizenship covers a much larger area today than what was true in St. Paul's time. Professor Nils Dahl of Yale University has properly observed, "In a situation in which Christians find themselves co-responsible for the order of society, social and political questions ... take on a significance which they neither had nor could have had in the New Testament period." (*Lutheran World*, Fourth Quarter 1965)

During the Reformation period both Wittenberg and Geneva used the concept of two kingdoms to provide a guideline in apprehending God's will for the Christian in his responsibilities to the state. Some Lutherans have used this concept as a doctrine and have proceeded to allow a wall to be raised between the two kingdoms.. But actually it is

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* Address given at meeting of the United States Conference of Member Churches of the World Council of Churches, Buckhill Falls, April 1966.

not an official doctrine of the Lutheran Church, nor of any other Church as far as I know. It is rather a hermaneutical principle. As such, does it not have meaning for us also today?

When the Church speaks about any kind of involvement, the individual believer is always exposed to the invidious temptation that the degree of his involvement in good works is the basis for his aceptance by God. In the kingdom of *faith*, nothing avails but grace. No personal, community, or international piece of good work can become the basis for the forgiveness God offers in Christ. But the forgiven person has been set free that he might act responsibly in love. St. Paul underscored this strongly when he wrote to the Church in Ephesus, "... we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Eph. 2. 10).

The Christian's daily life is lived in the secular kingdom. It is here that he sustains his relationship to other people and to community life. This is the realm in which he must make his ethical decisions. But it is never easy. Evil is an objective reality in the world. It cannot be eradicated, but it must not be suffered supinely, permitting it to have a field day. Lest this happens it must be fought continually. In doing this the Christian will use the best insights that obedience and reason provide.

In this struggle the Christian will beware lest he become an idealist unaware of his own finiteness. Man is limited by the place of his calling, the age in which he lives, the particular problems that afflict his generation, his own skills and the capacity of his reason, and the power of evil. The Christian will be optimistic about carrying out God's injunctions to subdue the earth, but he is realistic about accomplishing this task with his own power.

The Church is the people of God in the world—a people organized into institutions in society. The people of God live consciously in the world and carry a responsibility to be concerned about justice and the good of all people. Therefore, the Church accepts the role of constructive criticism of the state in order that the aims of the state may be furthered. But in doing this the Church never uses the power of the sword. And it must always be open to acknowledge its own sin and prejudice. To do this openly before the world is in itself a witness to the truth.

In my judgment the six areas of concern set forth in the CCIA charter provide a comprehensive and a specific frame of reference for the involvement of the Church in international affairs. This means not only

training in the disciplines of the devotional life—prayer and meditation, but also training in the issues of the day. "This training does not necessarily receive its directives from the Gospel itself (for the Gospel is not ethic *per se*) but from reason which is freed by the Gospel to participate in a redemptive way in the world, taking note of changing situations, possible achievement, recognition of the rights of others to disagree, and its own limitations. The Church, therefore, recognizes no absolute answers to most human questions but seeks to persuade men to operate freely within given structures motivated by love." (Professor Kent Knutson of Luther Theological Seminary, St. Paul, Minnesota, in a private essay)

A second and supplementary method is action by the Churches as a community of churches. Councils of churches can contribute by self-study, through supervision of cooperative analyses of problems, and through assisting in the achievement of consensus after careful study of issues. Where substantial consensus results, the Church should witness through a public statement. There will be risk involved, the risk of sometimes being wrong; but to hesitate for this reason only is to bury one's talent.

Finally, involvement will also mean intercession. The contemporary Church has had a tendency to allow action to preempt the call to prayer. St. Paul admonished Timothy to make "supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgiving... for all men, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life" (I Tim. 2. 1-2). On the basis of this text Karl Barth has commented: "Prayer for the bearers of State authority belongs to the very essence of its (the Church's) existence. It would not be a Church, if it were to ignore the apostolic exhortation." (Karl Barth, *Church and State* — 1939, page 51)

ECUMENICAL CHRONICLE

MEDITATION BY EMILIO CASTRO FOR THE OPENING SERVICE OF WORSHIP

Conference on Church and Society in July 1966
I Corinthians 1. 18 - 2. 3

Dear Friends,

We have met here from every corner of the earth. From the human point of view everything separates us : the colour of our skin, difference of language, and the inevitable ideological differences that we carry around. Many of us live in affluent societies where the cultural opportunities are within reach of nearly everyone, others come from poor countries where culture is still the privilege of a few people and where man is still struggling for the bare necessities of life. We come from rival societies which are antagonistic or even hostile. What brings us here ? It is the desire to examine what is happening in our world and to interpret through those events the will of God for the life of our church and for ourselves as individuals. We come together with our human differences but we are united by a common concern. How can we discover God's action in the world and support it ? The task is beyond human power. How are we to overcome our differences ? How are we to prevent our different approaches from becoming mere monologues instead of a genuine creative dialogue ? What is to be the common point, the perspective, the meeting place of all our reflections ? How can we prevent ourselves from building a modern tower of Babel in which we shall be completely divided because of our different languages, so that the result is still greater confusion ?

The apostle Paul, in the above passage, adopts an approach (which we should like to adopt also) a point of view from which to examine the whole task. Writing to his friends in Corinth (with whom he had to discuss many practical matters) he says "I resolved that while I was with you I would think of nothing but Jesus Christ — Christ nailed to the cross." This afternoon we should like to place the figure of Jesus Christ crucified as the central point of reflection for our work during the next two weeks. Is this not being too pietistic ? Are we not trying to escape from the complexity of social problems into a precinct of religion which we think is safe ? At first sight the technical world in which we are living and the multiplicity of our cultural attainments seemed to contrast completely with the poverty and insignificance of a Man

crucified in Galilee. However, the Christian faith invites us to perceive Him as the centre of all revelation, the place which explains God's plans for the whole of mankind, both in terms of historical development and in personal terms.

We shall not be escaping from reality, nor taking refuge in a pious dream, if when contemplating the cross of Jesus Christ we perceive it to be a secular event, a historic event in which the magnitude of God's plan for His world is revealed to the wondering eyes of faith. Let us contemplate Christ crucified: "our eyes fixed on Jesus, on whom faith depends from start to finish: Jesus who, for the sake of the joy that lay ahead of him, endured the cross, making light of its disgrace, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God." (Hebrews 12. 2).

What do we see there?

I. We see the reflection of our own moral poverty and of God's judgement upon it. If the world in which we live is capable of crucifying someone who lived only in order to do good, then we understand what God's judgement is upon this world. It was the good people of this world who crucified Jesus Christ. It was people who claimed to know what truth was, what goodness was, and what justice was. That is a permanent record of the terrible plight of mankind and of the judgement which will be passed upon all our human actions. The cross will remind us how precarious all our human institutions are and how unable to free us from our attachment to the national situations which we represent, or to the ideologies which dominate us consciously or unconsciously. The cross reminds us that there is no human institution, however perfect it may seem, which deserves our ultimate loyalty; because that human institution cannot pass the test of God's goodness manifest in Jesus Christ. Contemplation of the cross prevents us from accepting an easy optimism about evolution; it reminds us of the tremendous crises and revolutions of which human history is composed. The cross forces us to face realistically the forces which are resisting the will of God. It will remind us that we are still living in the age before the end, when everything is provisional, tentative and precarious. It reminds us how precarious all human institutions are and calls us to repent; it opens up the way and frees us from the claims of our own institutions. Everything that we propose here, everything which comes out of our discussions, will be offered to our churches and to our world in the humble attitude of those who realise that it is subject to a higher Judge before whom it will always be very inadequate: the Judgement of the crucified Christ who gave His life for us in love.

II. However, that cross which is the judgement on our historical achievements, which reminds us of the drama of our human condition, is also God's joyful promise concerning our efforts. At the very place where all the evil in the

world was concentrated to destroy the Prince of Love, there also was concentrated all the goodness of the world in God's acceptance of mankind, and there we perceive the creation of a new Covenant. The cross is the rainbow which seals the new Covenant. On the morning of the resurrection it was to confirm the final victory over sin and death. However realistic our view may be we cannot forget that Christ "has overcome the World." Humbly, but with the boldness of faith, we can defy the structures of power in our world, knowing that God himself is at work there helping to bring about the dawn of a way of live which will be fuller, freer and more responsible.

The last word cannot be one of pessimism, it cannot be one of judgement on our world ; it must be a word of hope for a world which God did not despise but to which He sent his own Son. Our whole task, our studies, our efforts to help our neighbour, are guaranteed, assisted and confirmed by the victory obtained by God in Christ on the cross. As individuals we live by means of His pardon, we are living in the age of God's patience, the age of hope. Every human situation is subject to God's judgement ; at the same time it is filled with promise and bears God's blessing.

III. Thirdly the cross shows us the way of life which is suitable for those who consider themselves disciples of Jesus Christ. We are here representing churches which are praying for us and hoping that our meeting will clarify their problems and help them to solve them. We are a congregation representing the servants of Christ. "If I, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, then you should wash one another's feet." If our Lord went even to the cross surrendering His own life with complete self-sacrifice for the benediction of mankind, what other course can the Church take except to follow in the steps of its own Lord ? We are not here to ask ourselves how the church can preserve its own ways, or how it can survive in a new age, we are here to ask how the Church can forget itself and contribute in some way to the salvation of man all over the world. Our concern must not be to safeguard an institution (however holy it may be) ; we must ask ourselves whether, through the mission of that institution and its members, it is really following Him who gave His life for man on the cross.

But most important of all, my friends, if we think only of Jesus Christ and Him who was crucified we realise that the ultimate dimension of our task transcends mere intellectual discussion (however profound and learned), and becomes a human, personal task. The cross reminds us that when we speak of economic, sociological or political problems, we are speaking of the men and women whom Jesus Christ regarded as His own brothers once and for all when he accepted the cross. Therefore all our considerations will bear the character of a witness to our faith. It is because Jesus Christ took upon himself the destiny of man, that we are here today for these discussions,

seeking that the sufferings of Christ may not have been in vain, but that the fruits of His love poured out from the cross may be transmitted today to our fellow men. We are not considering "problems." We cannot evade the issue by making impersonal statements. We cannot philosophise about history. In our discussion we must express our genuine concern for man as he is, with his own name, for those "least of His brethren," those children of whom is the Kingdom of heaven. The cross humanises all our relations, placing them before God. "I resolved that while I was with you I would think of nothing but Jesus Christ — Christ nailed to the cross." (I Cor. 2. 2). During these two weeks let us concentrate all our thinking on the cross, because there is the wisdom of God which we need to understand His voice and His promise for us today, and because there we perceive the way of life to which God calls us.

Note. — The quotations are from the New English Bible.

WORLD COUNCIL DIARY

The World Conference on Church and Society

The issues of Church and Society have had an important place in the programme of World Council Assemblies and a number of consultations had been held on the subject, but the Geneva conference in July of this year was the first world conference on this comprehensive and difficult theme since the Oxford Conference of Life and Work on Church, Community and State in 1937. The two conferences had in common that they were well prepared. The four volumes published for the 1966 meeting are worthy companions of the seven volumes published under the general direction of Dr. J. H. Oldham in 1937.

Geneva 1966 was in several ways a more risky undertaking than Oxford 1937. In the thirties the ecumenical movement was still largely Western in both the ecclesiastical and geographical sense. So the cultural problem was simpler than in Geneva where, as an observer put it, we had "the effective presence of the whole human family." Similarly the thirties were a time of growing theological consensus and that cannot be said of our time. We must add that Oxford had also a clear focus in the common repudiation of the national socialist conception of the world, while Geneva 1966 had to face that incredible mass of problems of human relations in which our modern world is involved: Again the 1937 conference was a conference of the participating churches, while the 1966 conference was a conference speaking to the churches and not speaking on their behalf. The advantage of this arrangement was that the Geneva meeting could include a larger representation of Christian laymen than we had ever had before gathered at a world conference. All of these live in the midst of the social realities of our time, many of these outstanding experts in ihetr various fields.

Whatever else can and must be said about these two weeks of hard and intensive work, they proved to be a radical educational experience for all concerned. No one could fail to discover new aspects of the present world situation or at least to realise through direct encounter with persons what the facts previously learned in reports and books meant in real life for his fellow-Christians and fellow-men. The theoretical neighbour became the neighbour of flesh and blood.

On the Sunday-morning in the cathedral the pulpit was empty because Martin Luther King could not leave Chicago in the midst of the racial crisis. Yet when

we heard his message of warning and hope coming straight out of that crisis, the awareness that this conference was concerned with the real life, the real suffering of men was confirmed.

It was inevitable that for many, such an experience represented a sort of shock-treatment. To hear not only young activists but also professors of theology talk so much about revolution is an unusual experience. It must be admitted that the word was too often used as a slogan without definition of its meaning. On the other hand people from countries which have known long ago great revolutions and which remember them with pride are sometimes too easily perturbed when revolution is spoken of as a present-day reality rather than as a date in history. Fortunately the section report dealing with this issue makes the necessary distinctions and gives a constructive answer concerning the Christian attitude in revolutionary situations.

Did the conference succeed in giving clear duidance to the churches and to the World Council concerning their future policy and action in the field of social and international affairs? It is perhaps too early to give a definite answer to this question. It will take time to arrive at an objective judgment concerning the significance of the reports. It is likely that some will be found to be of lasting value, while others will not make a deep impression on our further work and action. This is the practically inevitable result of the dilemma in which we find ourselves with regard to conference-procedure. On the one hand, the desire to deal with all issues relevant to our membership in all parts of the world and to give all voices equal opportunity ; on the other hand, the demands of thoroughness and of expert knowledge.

Of all subjects dealt with, none proved to be more central for the conference itself and for the work of the whole ecumenical movement than the question of social justice at the international and intercontinental level. We were fortunate in having among our speakers and participants a number of men and women who are not only thoroughly conversant with the problems of development and of economic relationship between the affluent nations and the nations struggling against poverty and hunger but who are also deeply convinced that our generation can and must take imaginative and drastic action to overcome this greatest of all human problems of our time. What the reports have to say on this issue deserves the very careful study of all the churches. The World Council itself will now have to ask itself in what way it can give a high priority to this question. An inter-divisional team of the WCC staff will be formed to elaborate proposals for the Executive and Central Committees and it is hoped that at the fourth Assembly in 1968 this matter will have an important place on the programme. We may therefore hope that the World Conference on Church and Society will have a very considerable influence on the life of the WCC. The depth of that

influence will however largely depend on the seriousness with which the member churches will consider the conclusions to which the conference was led.

Will they be ready to listen ; be open to be convinced and, escaping from their national and personal prejudices, hear what God has been saying to His Church through this Conference ?

World consultation on Inter-Church Aid

In earlier years the Division of Inter-Church Aid of the World Council of Churches held a world consultation annually . Since the work of the churches in inter-church aid has grown world wide, world consultations are held every three years and regional consultations are organised annually. The World Consultation held at Swanwick, Britain, from July 4-11, 1966 was the second one organised under this new plan — regional consultations having been held in Asia (1963) and Africa (1965).

The Swanwick Consultation brought together some 250 people representing 79 countries. It had as its theme "Inter-Church Aid in the Next Ten Years." The meeting provided an opportunity for conference about the present programmes of Inter-Church Aid and for looking towards future developments. This task was given added importance by the imminence of the Fourth Assembly of the WCC in 1968 at which legislation will have to be sought concerning the nature and task of the Division of Inter-Church Aid, Refugee and World Service in the next years.

This Consultation had certain distinctive features. It was the most widely representative of all the consultations held thus far ; no previous consultation has had to deal with such a wide ranging enterprise, and at no consultation has the mind and judgment of the churches of Asia, Africa and Latin America been so adequately represented and expressed.

Certain characteristics were given to the consultation by events in the life of the World Council as a whole. The increased representation of the Orthodox churches in the World Council was reflected in this consultation — so, too, the influence was felt of the changed climate of relationships with the Roman Catholic Church.

The effect of the integration of the International Missionary Council and the World Council of Churches, already strongly felt in the growing relationships of DWME and DICARWS, was given a further manifestation in discussions of the ways in which projects in the field of the missionary work of the churches can be listed and commended through the Project List which in future will be prepared and promulgated by the Division of Inter-Church Aid in association with the Division of World Mission and Evangelism.

The Consultation was perhaps most influenced by its anticipation of the Church and Society Conference which was to follow immediately afterwards. Many members of the Consultation were proceeding to the Conference and had read the preparatory literature. Some of the speakers at the Consultation were among those who had been involved in preparation for the Church and Society Conference. The result was that the Consultation began to enquire what new emphases must be made in the types of projects and programmes of Inter-Church Aid so that Christian concern for social and economic justice could be expressed in the practical work of the churches.

The Consultation urged the Division to formulate policies and programmes which would look beyond development aid to the changing structure of church and society, beyond cooperation to community, beyond service to the world to involvement with the world.

At the same time the Consultation was in no doubt that the present ministries to peoples in need must continue and be extended.

The Consultation may be summed up as a summons to the churches to do two things at once : alleviate the needs of people today and at the same time struggle to remove the causes of need to ensure a better tomorrow.

The August Executive Committee

There was, one may say, nothing dramatic or even unusual about the Agenda of the Executive held in early August in Geneva. Yet perhaps it is only our familiarity with change that makes it possible to say that of business which included the near arrival of global TV and its possible use at Uppsala 1968 ; or about the closing of the historic Edinburgh House in London, the abiding reminder of the 1910 Conference and the seat of so many ecumenical memories. Not least of the items to make the session of the Executive memorable was the recognition that it was Dr. Visser 't Hooft's last appearance as General Secretary.

The chief interest was undoubtedly the report of the Church and Society Conference and plans to consider its follow-up. The General Secretary made a remarkably fair appraisal of the Conference and of the searching character of those findings which the delegates had laid upon the Council and upon the Churches for their consideration. He undertook to set up interdivisional consultation to discuss the implications of the four Conference reports for all the departments of the Council's work. Especially on the question of development aid some members felt this might mark an historic change in thought and practice. Indeed, in their current Divisional reports, it was clear that Committees had already seen how far-reaching the judgements of the Conference might be on their future work.

Considerable thought was given to preparations for the Assembly. There too, it was recognised that the Church and Society Conference would have a most important influence on the programme. We learned of the preparations already being made by the Swedish Ecumenical Council, of the early production of the Pre-Assembly booklet and made plans for the preparatory meetings next year which must approve the material prepared for the thought of the Sections.

Frequently during the business of these four days the current theological debate came into the discussions. We heard again of the theological polarisation of the current extremes of theological emphasis and of the need for the World Council to find some living room in which to serve those who were being influenced by the most persuasive formulations. From one end the DEA spoke of their sense of mission to deal most seriously with the "Death of God" theology ; and from the other end Dr. Eugene Smith, reporting from a conference of Conservative Evangelicals, begged us to declare ourselves with a clear voice on evangelism.

Needless to say, we received reports of the current progress of the Joint Working group with the Roman Catholics and learned of the forthcoming conference at the Hague on the future of CCIA, who had recently celebrated their 20th birthday. After taking action to appoint a permanent officer of the WCC to serve the interest of National Councils, the Committee rose to salute its General Secretary with admiration and affection.

BOOK REVIEWS

THE FINALITY OF CHRIST

CHRIST THE MEANING OF HISTORY, *by* HENDRIKUS BERKHOF. Translated from the Dutch by Lambertus Buurman. *SCM PRESS, London, 1966. 224 pp. 35s.*

Professor Berkhof makes only modest claims for his very stimulating book. In his original introduction he reviewed the new signs of an interest in the theology of history, mentioning the Reformed Synod's document and the Evanston Assembly's theme. He then continued : "But we have only just started. There will need to be much more thinking on this subject... it is my desire and hope to help with this process, with this book." The present reviewer, who shares Dr. Berkhofs convictions both about the importance of his subject and the need for further discussion, would like to pay tribute to the excellent and significant contribution that Dr. Berkhof has made, and to make his review not so much a commentary on the book, as a first exercise in the further thinking that the author desiderates.

First it seems to the reviewer that Dr. Berkhof has found a much more valid and effective way of talking theologically about man's "emancipation" in the present secular age than either the "Death of God" theologians in America (with e.g. van Burens "contagious freedom" of JESUS) or the "Honest to God" theologians of Britain (with e.g. Gregor Smith's "coming of age"). And yet, even though he be right in claiming that the possibility of technology is the result of the advent of the Kingdom of God, the question still has to be asked whether those who have been "in the Kingdom" have known of this before or during the rise of technology ; and whether, even now, the important connection is seen, appreciated and accepted as it should be. In a word, the Christian, for all the treasures of insight inherent in his faith is not very much, if at all, in advance of his times in penetrating to the inner meaning of what takes place in his world.

But the main concern of the reviewer's response to Dr. Berkhof must lie in the area of the question as to the way in which the Christian gospel is to be called historical. Dr. Berkhof finds it necessary to reject Dr. Dodd's views on an eschatology that us realised. He seems to have right on his side in rejecting a view holding that "the Kingdom was not meant to be an entity in history, but a "timeless fact," an "eternal order," in an almost platonic sense of the word." (though this may not be altogether fair to Dodd !). The alternative, of course, is to see the Kingdom as an entity in history : the great question then is "How ?" The answer to this question is certainly critical, and an adequate statement will not be easy to make.

History, as Dr. Berkhof sees, is constituted by events. And "events" take place because agents interact in them. If then the "Kingdom of God" is "in history" it may be looked for either as an agent participating in an event, or as an event in which one or more agents act. No little confusion has been caused because this important distinction has not been adequately considered.

For the Kingdom can be spoken of in both ways. The first way would lend authority to Dodd's theory of a "realized" eschatology, for it would see the event of the Kingdom as that complex of events known to Christians as taking place between the "birth" and the "ascension" of Jesus Christ, in which, in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, God was himself participant in historical events, through which he also asserted his authority as "king." The second way might be thought to give a better explication of the quasi-Platonic character of the Kingdom, for it would be claimed that in a certain series of events in human history God had done something, once and for all, to "reconcile the world to himself."

There are, fortunately, human analogies to help the human understanding ! "Caesar crossed the Rubicon." That was an event which was, in one sense exhausted in its occurrence, as all historical events are. The precise time of the event can be specified. It took place then, and not at another time. But in another sense the event of Caesar crossing the Rubicon was not exhausted in its occurrence ; and so long as barbarism does not wholly submerge Europe again, the event never will be exhausted. Or, to take another, perhaps more fruitful illustration, the French Revolution took place in 1879, an event which, like all historical events, was exhausted in its occurrence. And yet, what did occur in that event ? Ask a French Communist, a French Royalist, a French Catholic conservative, and at least three different answers will be given. As the years of this century go on, France may eventually yield to a Communist Revolution ; and if and when that comes, the authorized French History books will print what they will claim is the "final," the "true" account of what took place in the French Revolution.

It would seem then that what is needed in some analysis of history which will enable a distinction to be drawn between occurrence and event (which would not be the same as that between "Geschichte" and "Historie".) This would enable the Christian to see the occurrences of the life of Jesus as part of an event whose form, content and meaning is known to the eye of faith ; which is not removed from history, but remains part of it, impressing its own form upon all subsequent occurrences, whatever they may be. In other words perhaps, it could be said that the *stories* of Jesus have all been told, from those of his "birth" to those of his death, "re-surrection" and "ascension" it is essential to tell the *story* of Jesus in such words as Paul used "God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself" ; knowing that the passage from "stories" to "story" is not one from historical reality to speculative theology, but from the occurrences in history to *the* event of history.

Having said thus much, it may be useful to add a word on typology. Among many moderns typology is an ugly word and an uglier reality. The reviewer shares Dr. Berkhofs sense of the importance of typology for history. May the case for typology, as distinct from say, allegory be put thus : An allegory is an invented story intended not to throw light upon one historical situation, but to state quite general truths, applicable to any (appropriate) historical situation. Augustine's interpretation of the Good Samaritan comes to mind : the certain man is man : the Good Samaritan is Christ ; the oil and wine are the two dominical sacraments etc. etc. By contrast typology bids the reader stay within the reported situation, and import into it, for its deaper discernment and understanding some figure, prophecy or event from the past, with an historical meaning already established and accepted. So when Mark

tells his reader that John the Baptist was "clothed with camels hair, and had a leather girdle around his waist" they were meant to catch the allusion to Elijah (2 Kings. 1. 8) and so be ready to see John as the pre-runner of the Messiah, who was to come upon the scene shortly (Mark 1. 9).

No doubt, as Professor Berkhof insights, typology is an instrument of much wider use than in the scriptures. It is, in fact, a contemporary tool of the journalist. Is there "another Nazi" movement starting in Germany, asks one? Britain needs "another Churchill" laments another. But it must be stressed that in the gospels typology is a rich and rewarding device, used to point out to the reader how the occurrences he learns about are part of one great event — the "coming of the Kingdom." "God reconciling the world to himself" or some particular ingredient in that event, such as the actual participation of God in the deeds of Jesus.

In conclusion, be it repeated that Professor Berkhof has made a notable contribution to the thinking he looks for. We are all in his debt. He has come closer than most writers to seeing and formulating clearly what it means to say that the Gospel is history. But he still has not quite broken through to the point where the Gospel, while absorbing into its Kerygma certain occurrences of history, remains within history to absorb all its occurrences, the "only event, in one sense" as Dorothey Sayers said in her preface to "A Man Born to be King", "that has ever really happened."

JOHN MARSH.

AN ECUMENICAL ANTHOLOGY OF PREACHING

DIE VERKÜNDIGUNG DES REICHES GOTTES IN DER KIRCHE JESU CHRISTI. Zeugnisse aus allen Jahrhunderten und allen Konfessionen. Band VII: Von der Mitte des 19. bis zur Mitte des 20. Jahrhunderts, *von* ERNST STAEHELIN. *Verlag Friedrich Reinhardt AG, Basel. 626 pp., Fr. 54.—*

This collection of many different passages renders the ecumenical discussion a great service. The author has attempted to illustrate — in the light of selected texts — the "proclamation of the Kingdom of God" throughout the centuries. He does not choose texts of one confession only. The title of the book itself implies that his view is directed towards the Church of Christ in its entirety. The book thus bears a certain ecumenical witness. It makes quite clear how the main content of the Gospel has again and again come through in all the confessions and still makes itself heard.

In his treatment of this theme, the author was obviously convinced that too much significance could quite easily be given to the outward forms of the individual churches. The Church in his view is "essentially invisible," and it is the result of "constraints arising from the nature of the fallen creation" that it has to assume external forms of order and organization. If it assumes such forms, it falls with a "certain inevitability into different pieces." The individual churches may well be Christian to a greater or lesser extent but in any event they are only an insufficient vehicle for the proper content of the Gospel.

This collection comprising seven sturdy volumes is indeed impressive evidence of the fact that confessional differences can be overestimated. The proclamation of God's Kingdom as a living and renewing power has again

and again to break through men's consolidation of external forms. The ecumenical movement could not be thought of without the conviction that the unity given to us in Christ is more powerful than all the things that divide us. The various passages collected here indicate that this conviction can be deepened and strengthened by an unprejudiced study of the historical material.

One question remains however. Even if all the passages centre upon the thought of the "proclamation of God's Kingdom" and are kept together by this point of view, does not this selection still have a somewhat arbitrary character? Each author quoted here wrote in particular circumstances and connections. His writing can only be understood in the framework of his surroundings, and the statements he makes concerning the Kingdom of God are only fully relevant in the whole context of his belief, theology, and church membership. The individual testimonies are not so easily to be isolated. Perhaps, therefore, the volumes offer no more than an enriching and stimulating *florilegium*. Occasionally, however, the impression is created that the whole inner relationship of the history of God's people is not taken seriously enough.

The seventh and last volume brings us up to modern times. For all those who take an immediate interest in the ecumenical movement it is especially important because a collection has been made of passages on the Kingdom of God, written since the beginning of the more recent ecumenical movement. Special mention should be made of the extracts from the conferences of Oxford (1937), Edinburgh (1937), Amsterdam (1948) and Evanston (1954). The question of the relation between the Kingdom of God and the Church was a special concern of the Second World Conference on Faith and Order (Edinburgh). The author himself was present at this meeting and edited the report in German.

In his concluding remarks, the author indicates that expectation of the Kingdom of God has not received enough attention in the liturgical year. He suggests that the last Sunday of the ecclesiastical year, i.e. the last Sunday before Advent, should be dedicated to "looking forward to the marvellous fulfilment of the Kingdom of God" — a suggestion which deserves to be taken into serious consideration.

LUKAS VISCHER.

LIBERTY FOR ERROR AND LIBERTY FOR TRUTH

RELIGIOUS LIBERTY AND ROMAN CATHOLIC TRADITION. Problèmes chrétiens sur la liberté religieuse, *by* GUY DE BROGLIE, S. J. *Beauchesne, Paris, 1965, 186* pp.

Father de Broglie, 77, is a distinguished theologian who has been teaching dogmatic theology for more than forty years at the "Institut catholique" in Paris, and at the "Gregoriana" University in Rome. Having been adviser to several bishops at the Second Vatican Council, he became particularly concerned with the problems aroused by the "schema" on Religious Liberty, which he rightly considered as the main point of tension between the "traditional" and the "progressive" Roman Catholic thinking.

This book, as well as his previous one (Le droit naturel à la liberté religieuse, Beauchesne, Paris, 1964), was published before the Vatican Declaration on Religious Liberty, promulgated December 1965. It would seem that the

author's purpose in writing these two books was to rally a general and almost unanimous consensus in favour of the Council's proclamation of universal civil religious freedom. To attain this goal Father de Broglie considers it necessary to eliminate from the two theological streams (one against and the other in favour of religious liberty) all the exaggerations which in his view make these two streams irreconcilable.

The author thinks that there are two very important points which should be reconsidered in this context. The first is whether the religious liberty for truth is exactly the same as the religious liberty for error. The second is to explain the historical attitude of the Roman Catholic Church which would seem contrary to religious liberty and therefore makes the declaration in its favour so difficult.

Concerning the first point, Father de Broglie is very positive in saying that religious liberty for error can by no means be the same as religious liberty for truth. In his efforts to show the clear difference between these two kinds of freedom the author gives some examples from everyday life, of which we reproduce the following. Two men leave Paris on a journey to Provence; the first to care for his old mother who has been taken gravely ill, the second to join his mistress. According to Father de Broglie, both have freedom to go on their journeys, but it seems evident to him that these two freedoms cannot possibly be the same. We fully accept the correctness of this example and reasoning on the *moral level*; still more do we think that, in giving *some positive help* to these men for their journeys, our attitude could and should be very different. But we cannot accept, and we wonder whether it was de Broglie's intention to accept, that *the civil right not to be impeded* can differ in any way. Now in the Vatican Declaration on Religious Liberty the subject is exclusively the civil right not to be impeded of acting freely in religious matters. Therefore and on this legal level we cannot see the relevance of Father Broglie's distinction.

Further de Broglie is also very much concerned with the historical attitude of the Roman Catholic Church contrary to religious freedom. In this matter the author succeeds in showing that the religious freedom condemned by the popes of the 19th century was *absolute* freedom of conscience independent of God himself and of God's laws and not the civil religious freedom which is demanded by the universal conscience of mankind. Besides, this matter had been fully and remarkably treated by a Professor Roger Aubert of the University of Louvain, Belgium (L'enseignement du magistère ecclésiastique au XIXe siècle sur le libéralisme).[1]

We wonder whether the very valuable efforts of Father de Broglie to rally the traditional minority to the ascertainment of religious liberty was successful. At any rate his two books, although having very just and provocative considerations, have been superceded by the Vatican Declaration on Religious Liberty. Indeed the Vatican document has established the whole problem of civil religious freedom on a much more solid basis so that further Roman Catholic studies on this matter will be able to lay aside all questions that are no longer relevant today.

A. F. CARRILLO DE ALBORNOZ.

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[1] See A. F. CARRILLO DE ALBORNOZ, *Roman Catholicism and Religious Liberty*, chapter III, "Religious Liberty and Roman Catholic Tradition," pp. 57-77.

THE POST-VATICAN II ATTITUDE TO SCRIPTURE

THE HUMAN REALITY OF SACRED SCRIPTURE (Concilium Vol. X). ED. P. BENOIT, and R. E. MURPHY, *New York : Paulist Press, VIII + 212 pp. $4.50. Who is Jesus of Nazareth ?* (Concilium Vol. XI). ED. E. SCHILLEBEECKX, O. P. *VIII + 163 pp. $4.50.*

The Second Vatican Council has not achieved a revolution in the thought and practice of the Roman Church. It has inaugurated a revolution and laid down the lines it must follow. It has proclaimed the essentially human character of the church as the people of God and of the Bible as the book of the people of God. It has repudiated the old idea that tradition is a source of revelation independently of Scripture. It now remains for Roman Catholic scholars to show how their theological thinking may be renewed on the firm basis of Scripture, properly expounded with all the tools of modern critical scholarship.

The Paulist Press has set about this task with commendable alacrity, by mobilizing an international team of scholars to provide an introduction to "theology in the age of renewal," under the general title of Concilium. The two most recent volumes in the series deal with Scripture and the Christological doctrine required by the modern approach to Scripture. Both volumes clearly state that the old scholastic method, which treated Scripture as a quarry for proof-texts to support a preconceived dogmatic structure, must give place to a more dynamic conception of revelation. The Bible comes home to us as the Word of God, not when we treat it as a uniform collection of propositional truths, universally valid, but only when we recognise that its various parts were addressed by particular men to particular human situations, and so allow these men the freedom to say what themselves want to say.

The volume on Scripture contains three essays which describe the modern exegetical method, with particular reference to inspiration, the church, and preaching ; three essays which exemplify it (on Moses and Jesus, on Jesus as the Word of God, and on the Old Testament antecedents of the doctrine of the church in Ephesians) ; two bibliographical surveys of recent work on the prophets and the wisdom literature ; and, curiously, two essays on "Family Planning in Latin America" and "Aggiornamento in the Mission Field." The second volume deals with a variety of Christological themes, ranging from the implications of Form Criticism to the Descent into Hell. These contributions are not all equally successful in their application of basic principals. An essay on Hebrews treats the offering of Christ's blood as though it were made constantly in the heavenly temple, and ignores the once-for-all finality which is so strongly emphasized in this epistle. An exposition of Philippians 2 : 7 treats Christ's kenosis as a human choice of the servant status, made in the course of his earthly life, though the order of clauses seems to require that both the *kenosis* and the slave-form were inseparable from the process of becoming man. The essay on the universal kingship of Christ tries to relate Christ to the cosmos with the help of Teilhard de Chardin and Rahner, without asking what connexion was in the mind of the author of Colossians and Ephesians. But such detailed criticism merely shows how completely these Catholic scholars have committed themselves to the rough-and-tumble of critical debate ; for it is only by exposing ourselves to the criticisms of others

that we can in the end submit ourselves to the real authority of the Word of God. What is perhaps more important is the capacity of these scholars to appreciate the real benefits to biblical study that have come such movements as Form Criticism, without necessarily accepting the philosophical presuppositions of Bultmann and his school. It is not beyond the realms of possibility that they should be the ones to show us the way back to a healthy quest of the historical Jesus.

To anyone who has followed the course of the Second Vatican Council it must be obvious that the shape of the future for Rome depends on what happens from now on in the theological seminaries. If these books are a fair sample of the text-books that are to be used in the training of priests, we have every reason to expect that future will be rich and exciting.

GEORGE B. CAIRD.

THE ECUMENICAL WORD IN EAST GERMANY

KONFESSION UND ÖKUMENE, Aspekte - Probleme - Aufgaben. Edited *by* HELMUT RISTOW and HELMUTH BURGERT, *Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, Berlin, 1965, 588 pp. MDN 22.— (East German Mark)*

This Volume contains, after a brief foreword, fifty-eight papers of fifty-eight different persons. The nature and size of the contributions vary widely, from a two-page-statement of Archbishop Iakovos on his main impressions at the New Delhi Assembly to a twenty-two-page-analysis of the ecumenical situation in Egypt by Klaus Kremkau. Some of the articles are reprints from periodicals. About thirty authors are of German origin, twelve of which are actually living in the German Democratic Republic, where indeed the book has been edited and published. A good number of contributions by other European churchmen and theologians have been included, but other continents are only scarcely represented.

The book aims at bringing ecumenical consciousness into the congregations of East Germany. Obviously, the third Assembly of the World Council of Churches in New Delhi had created so much interest [1], that the need for more information about the ecumenical movement, its achievements and problems, was acutely felt. It is good to remember, at this point, that the ecumenical movement has not been too vocal in German publications, although German is one of the WCC's official languages. Additionally, the distribution of ecumenical material in East Germany has been extremely limited. Therefore, a book like this is anything but just "another" ecumenical publication. It will serve as an important source of information and study material on the ecumenical movement. The editors wish this book to help especially laymen to become better acquainted with the world-wide nature of the Church and the manifold dimensions and aspects of ecumenical cooperation. Therefore the question has to be raised : does this book succeed in providing a fairly

[1] Bishop N. BESTE of Mecklenburg specifies this point in his contribution ("How can ecumenical consciousness become alive in our congregations ?") on page 344. The editors mention as their starting point New Delhi, the second Vatican Council, and the Lutheran Assembly at Helsinki.

representative collection of views, reports and analyses about the ecumenical movement? Does it offer a helpful guide into the present phase of ecumenical discussion and cooperation? Surely one has to allow for inevitable deficiencies. "Faith going into live action, and therefore any kind of church life including all relevant ecumenical activity can never be brought under a rigid system", the editors say on page 5. That is why they have decided not to attempt a systemstic treatment, but to describe the dynamics of Christian life in a world perspective, realizing that a collection of essays can never do complete justice to every aspect.

Beginning solemnly with five statements on the Assembly in New Delhi by the WCC's presidents, which serve as a starting point, the other essays are grouped in six sections. It is a little unfortunate that the table of contents does not identify these six sections, which are in fact only marked by Roman figures within the text. It is left to the reader to discover what the focal points of the sections are — there are no headliness or sub-titles provided [1]. The first section essentially clarifies and explains the very concept of ecumenicity and unity in the World Council of Churches on the basis of the New Testament and of systematic theology. The very careful and learned treatises are surely of lasting importance, including the reprinted ones. The second section deals with the relationship to the Roman Catholic Church and to Orthodox Christianity. The beginning of the Second Vatican Council is mentioned here and one can feel the tremendous rise of hope stimulated by this event. Now, of course, after the end of that Council, the essays dealing with Roman-Catholic relations are surely outdated, whereas those on the Orthodox Churches are still valid.

The third section is mainly devoted to a thorough discussion of intercommunion, but there is also a stimulating article by Hendrik Berkhof on "Reformed Confession and Ecumenicity."

The fourth section cannot easily be summarized. The main emphasis seems to be on the witness of the Church in a largely secularized society, grouping together a description by Gerhard Bassarak on the work of the Evangelical Academy in East Berlin, an essay on the Czech "pilgrim church" by Jan Lochman, an address by J. L. Hromadka to a meeting of a continuation committee of the Christian Peace Conference about an ecumenical witness amidst international tensions and a statement by Rudolf Weckerling on "Ecumenical Existence Today." It would have been excellent if this section had been further developed to include more material about a specific ecumenical witness in situations of tensions elsewhere.

The fifth section takes as its point of reference the local congregation. There is evidence of a great deal of thought on this vital point of the churches' life, but on first sight there seems to be no clear distinction between the various contributions. A more specific focussing on some key issues might have made the material more useful. The last paper in this section, an excellent summary on "Perspectives of an Ecumenical Diaconia" by Christian Berg does not really belong here — but this very fact points to a serious deficiency of this

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[1] In the foreword, the editors state their intention to distribute the whole material according to some broad themes for the sake of better orientation. Perhaps this can be implemented more effectively in a later edition.

collection: the already existing corporate action of the churches in the field of Inter Church Aid, Refugee, and World Service has not found adequate attention, leaving the impression that the churches share only information and academic discussions on certain common problems.

The last and biggest section is perhaps the most exciting one: here is a symposion of twenty articles, partly reviews of church situations in a selected number of (mostly European) countries, partly analyses of international denominations, partly descriptions of movements towards church unity, ending up with two essays on the relationship between Christianity and Israel. The reviewer cannot help but confess that he feels so much closer to reality in this section than in some on the others. The problems of majority and minority, of catholicity and particularity, of obedience to a compelling understanding of the New Testament on the one side and to contemporary challenges on the other, which are the very specific tensions of any responsible ecumenical life, come out most clearly here.

After all that has been said, the last word must be an expression of gratitude for this volume, which has apparently gone through a great many difficulties before even being published [1]. It is not only that extremely valuable ecumenical material has been collected here, but it is in itself already encouraging evidence of a newly emerging line of responsible theological thinking on the ecumenical dimension of German church life.

WARNER CONRING.

CHURCH GROWTH

NEW PATTERNS OF CHURCH GROWTH IN BRAZIL, *by* WILLIAM R. READ. *William B. Eerdmans publishing co., grand rapids, Michigan, 1965, 240* pp., $*2.45*

CHURCH GROWTH IN MEXICO, *by* DONALD MCGAVRAN, JOHN HUEGEL *and* JACK TAYLOR. *William B. Eerdmans publishing co., grand rapids, Michigan, 1963, 136 pp.,* $*1.95.*

WILDFIRE: CHURCH GROWTH IN KOREA, *by* ROY E. SHEARER. *William B. Eerdmans publishing co., grand rapids, Michigan, 1966, 242* pp., $*2.95.*

These three books focus the call to make disciples on Brazil, Mexico and Korea where the Holy Spirit has broken through traditional patterns. The phenomenal growth of the Pentecostal movement in Brazil and Mexico and the response of animistic people on Korea call us to further study and evaluation of the missionary task. These and other issues of Church growth are confronted by these authors as a stimulus to more intensive research.

In *New Patterns of Church Growth in Brazil*, Mr. Read's rightful assumption is that we must have as accurate a statistical picture as possible as a first step. Emphasis is made on the primary role of the evangelizers in contrast to the institution builders, the freedom of the churches to be distinctively Brazilian, and the need for mobility and flexibility in reaching the more responsive areas.

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[1] Most of the contributions were completed in 1962, but it was only in late 1965 that the book came out of the press.

Here is portrayed the amazing growth of the Pentecostal Churches, having reached a membership of 1,639,000 in 1964, 65.2% of the entire Protestant community. It is significant that the older denominations have worked increasingly among the middle classes, the Pentecostals have appealed almost entirely to the lower classes which constitute 85% of the population. To these humble masses the Pentecostal Churches have opened their doors, where there is no chasm between laity and clergy, where there is no dependence on foreign subsidy for support, and where the miraculous and mysterious give enrichment to the ordinary lives of people. These churches cannot be evaluated only in terms of their emotional excesses. There is opportunity for all to participate in the Christian fellowship in which their lives find meaning and expression.

Although the distinction between "civilizers and evangelizers" is valid, some will see the danger of making too marked a distinction between them, especially in view of the social struggle of the masses and the high percentage of illiteracy among them. Mr. Read is not unmindful of this. "If the Presbyterians in particular and the Evangelicals in general expect to win the masses, they must plead the cause of the masses... Protestants in Brazil must make it crystal clear that they are not neglecting today's burning social issues."

Dr. Donald McGavran in *Church Growth in Mexico*, with the assistance of the Rev. John Huegel and the Rev. Jack Taylor, has traced the problem of Church growth within Mexico. But there is more than one Mexico. The chapter entitled, "The Socio-Religious Mosaic" presents the rich and varied cultural context of the country which includes 88 Indian tribes and societies and 88 distinct Indian languages.

From this study the causes of Church growth, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, are found in indigenous churches motivated to plant other churches, in ordained men closely identified with the people, in laymen whose conversion has stimulated their evangelistic witness, in "People-movement" response in which the Gospel takes root in family and group relationships, and in Christians who have a vital connection with the people of the world.

The plea of Dr. McGavran is for missionaries motivated and qualified to assist in making disciples of the thousands who are receptive to the Gospel message. While one agree with the author's insistence on the primacy of the evangelistic motive, the instances he gives also point to the fulness of life which Christ brings. In his fine chapter on "Indian People Movement" he says that "their basic principle in evangelizing new villages is to find out the needs of the village and help the people there. After this has been done they preach Christ." One could also add that meeting the needs of the village is an act of service in which Christ is preached.

Again, the contribution of the Pentecostals has been noteworthy, even though smaller than in Brazil. The most significant growth among the old-line denominations has been with the Presbyterians and Methodists.

Mr. Shearer in *Wildfire : Church growth in Korea*, uses first-hand sources and his own experience as a missionary in Korea for his research. Major attention is given to the Presbyterian Church which has the strongest mission. A brief survey is also made of the work of other denominations. The study is chiefly confined to the years leading up to the end of World War II.

Yet the insights of the book and the questions raised are pertinent for today's understanding of our world mission. Mr. Shearer is in agreement with the authors of these other volumes that the key to Church growth is in an evangelizing Church. Concerning mission policy the first concern should be to plant churches. "If a Church obeys the Great Commission by our Lord and centers its primary concern on making disciples, it will plant many churches and follow with a good educational program." (p. 208.)

Another concern which Mr. Shearer underscores is the need to concentrate on responsive areas from which the contagion of evangelism spreads. He asserts that a "growing Church made up of people from a responsive population in a nation will win more Christians, even from a relatively non responsive area of that nation, than will a handful of professional personnel, both foreign and national, no matter how good servants or evangelists they may be."

In tracing the ups and downs of Church development, the author also shows that one cause of nongrowth has been the failure to deal with social problems. He points out that the identification of Christians with the independence movement in the 1920's strengthened their influence. The churches must be involved with the people in their common life.

These three books are of immense value in giving statistical and descriptive data concerning Church growth. In all of them the major stress is on winning and making disciples. Certainly there can be no growth without this.

At the same time, the assessment of growth must give far more consideration to its qualitative nature and penetrating influence than these authors were able to give in view of their objectives. What they have done should stimulate further theological and sociological study. What are the dimensions of evangelism? What is the effect of Church growth on the community?

What is the relation of Church growth to life in the midst of social upheaval and technological revolution? "The common people of Mexico have been rather successful in breaking their political chains, but the Church of Christ has nowhere successfully linked social revolution with the Evangelical Faith." This observation in *Church Growth in Mexico* should give us great concern. It calls us to probe deeply into a discovery of the revolutionary Gospel in which we profess to believe. Wherever this Gospel is preached and lived, human life is transformed.

GORDON R. LAHRSON.

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The Sin of Anti-Semitism. Statements by Christian Churches (15 pp.; $0.25).

VERLAG J. P. BACHEM, Köln:
Heinz-Dietrich Wendland, *Person und Gesellschaft in evangelischer Sicht* (219 pp.; DM 16.80).

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